THE

WORKS

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY

ARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

1316

INCLUDING

HER CORRESPONDENCE, POEMS,
AND ESSAYS.

PUBLISHED BY PERMISSION FROM HER GENUINE
PAPERS.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR RICHARD PHILLIPS,
No. 71, St. Paul's Church-yard.

1803.

T. Gillet, Printer, Salisbury-square.

to the best of my power. I can never be so agreeably employed as in amusing you.

You say nothing of ——. I guess you have nothing good to say.

I am very much concerned for the ill state of poor lady Oxford's[2] health: she is the only friend I can depend on in this world (except yourself): she tells me she stays at Welbeck, having been cheated of some thousands by one she employed in her building there, and is very troublesomely engaged in setting things in order.

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[2] Lady Henrietta Cavendish Holles, only daughter and heir of John duke of Newcastle, was married in 1713 to Edward earl of Oxford. She died December 8, 1755. Her only daughter was the late duchess of Portland.

1316

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Avignon, June 12, N. S. 1744.

I BELIEVE William may tell truth in regard to the expences of his journey, making it at a time when the passage of the troops had doubled the price of every thing; and they were detained ten days at Calais before they had permission to pass over. I represented these inconveniencies to them before they set out; but they were in such a hurry to go, from a notion that they should be forced to stay, after the declaration of war, that I could not prevail on them to stay a week longer, though it would probably have saved great part of their expense. I would willingly have kept them (with all faults), being persuaded of their fidelity, and that in case of any accident happening to me, you would have had a faithful account of my effects;

but it was impossible to make them contented in a country where there is neither ale nor salt beef.

This town is considerably larger than either Aix or Montpelier, and has more inhabitants of quality than of any other sort, having no trade, from the exactions of the French, though better situated for it than any inland town I know. What is most singular is the government, which retains a sort of imitation of the old Roman: here are two consuls chosen every year, the first of whom from the chief noblesse; and there is as much struggling for that dignity in the Hotel de Ville as in the Senate. The vice-legate cannot violate their privileges. As all governors naturally wish to increase their authority, there are perpetual factions of the same kind as those between prerogative and the liberty of the subject. We have a new vice-legate, arrived a few days since, nephew to cardinal Acquaviva, young, rich, and handsome,

and sets out in a greater figure than has ever been known here. The magistrate next to him in place is called the vignier, who is chosen every year by the Hotel de Ville, and represents the person of the pope in all criminal causes, but his authority is so often clipped by the vice-legate, there remains nothing of it at present but the honour of precedence during his office, and a box at the play-house gratis, with the superintendence of all public diversions. When Don Philip passed here, he begun the ball with his lady, which is the custom of all princes that pass.

The beginning of Avignon was probably a colony from Marseilles, there having been a temple of Diana on that very spot where I have my little pavilion. If there was any painter capable of drawing it, I would send you a view of the landscape, which is one of the most beautiful I ever saw.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Avignon, June 8, 1745.

I HAVE this day yours of the 8th of April, O. S. and at the same time one from lady Oxford, who has not received (as she says) any from me since November, though I have wrote several times.

I perfectly remember carrying back the manuscript you mention, and delivering it to lord Oxford. I never failed returning to himself all the books he lent me. It is true, I shewed it to the dutchess of Montagu, but we read it together, and I did not even leave it with her. I am not surprised that in that vast quantity of manuscripts some should be lost or mislaid, particularly knowing lord Oxford to be careless of them, easily lending, and as easily forgetting he had done it. I remember I carried him once one finely illuminated,

that, when I delivered, he did not recollect he had lent to me, though it was but a few days before. Wherever this is, I think you need be in no pain about it. The verses are too bad to be printed, excepting from malice, and since the death of Pope I know nobody that is an enemy to either of us. I will write to my son the first opportunity I have of doing it. By the post it is impossible at this time. I have seen the French list of the dead and wounded, in which he is not mentioned: so that I suppose he has escaped. All letters, even directed to Holland, are opened; and I believe those to the army would be stopped.

I know so little of English affairs, I am surprised to hear lord Granville[1] has lost his power.

[1] John Carteret, earl Granville, was secretary of state in 1720, lord lieutenant of Ireland from 1724 to 1730; in 1742 secretary of state, which office he resigned in 1744. He was a third time appointed secretary of state in February 1746, and removed on the 14th of the same month, to which circumstance this letter alludes.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Avignon, November 11, 1746.

I RECEIVED yours of October 15, yesterday, November 11. I was quite frightened at the relation of your indisposition, and am very glad I did not know it till it was over. I hope you will no more suffer the physicians to try experiments with so good a constitution as yours. I am persuaded mineral waters, which are provided by nature, are the best, perhaps the only real remedies, particularly that of Tunbridge, of which I have a great opinion. I would not trouble you with a long letter, which may be uneasy for you to read.

This present weather is esteemed a prodigy in this country. I begin almost to credit the tradition in Herodotus, and believe the world will once again change its

position, and Italy change situation with Muscovy.

I have not stirred out of my apartment these two months, although I have no reason to complain of my health: the continuation of yours is my most earnest wish.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Brescia, May 24, N. S. 1746.

I CAN no longer resist the desire I have to know what is become of ———. I have long suppressed it from a belief that if there was any thing of good to be told, you would not fail to give me the pleasure of hearing it. I find it now grows so much upon me, that whatever I am to know, I think it would be easier for me to support, than the anxiety I suffer from my doubts. I beg to be informed, and prepare myself for the worst, with all the philosophy I have. At my time of life I ought to be detached from a world which I am soon to leave; to be totally so is a vain endeavour, and perhaps there is vanity in the endeavour: while we are human, we must submit to human infirmities, and suffer them in mind as well as

body. All that reflection and experience can do is to mitigate, we can never extinguish, our passions. I call by that name every sentiment that is not founded upon reason, and own I cannot justify to mine the concern I feel for one who never gave me any view of satisfaction.

This is too melancholy a subject to dwell upon. You compliment me on the continuation of my spirits: 'tis true, I try to maintain them by every act I can, being sensible of the terrible consequences of losing them. Young people are too apt to let them sink on any disappointment. I have wrote to my daughter all the considerations I could think to lessen her affliction. I am persuaded you will advise her to amusement, and am very glad you continue that of travelling as the most useful for health. I have been prisoner here some months, by the weather: the rivers are still impassable in most places; when they are abated, I intend some little excursions,

being of your opinion, that exercise is as necessary as food, though I have at present no considerable complaint; my hearing, and I think my memory are without any decay, and my sight better than I could expect; it shall serve me to read many hours in a day. I have appetite enough to relish what I eat, and have the same sound uninterrupted sleep that has continued throughout the course of my life, and to which I attribute the happiness of not yet knowing the head-ach. I am very sorry you are so often troubled with it, but hope, from your care and temperance, that if you cannot wholly overcome it, yet it may be so far diminished, as not to give you any great uneasiness, or affect your constitution.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Brescia, Aug. 25, N. S. 1746.

YOU will be surprised at the date of this letter, but Avignon has been long disagreeable to me on many accounts, and now more than ever, from the increase of Scotch and Irish rebels, that choose it for their refuge, and are so highly protected by the vice-legate, that it is impossible to go into any company without hearing a conversation that is improper to be listened to, and dangerous to contradict. The war with France hindered my settling there for reasons I have already told you; and the difficulty of passing into Italy confined me, though I was always watching an opportunity of returning thither. Fortune at length presented me one.

I believe I wrote you word, when I was at Venice, that I saw there the count of

Wacherbarth, who was governor to the prince of Saxony, and is favourite of the king of Poland, and the many civilities I received from him, as an old friend of his mother's. About a month since, a gentleman of the bedchamber of the prince, who is a man of the first quality in this province, I believe charged with some private commission from the Polish court, brought me a letter of recommendation from count Wacherbarth, which engaged me to shew him what civilities lay in my power. In conversation I lamented to him the impossibility of my attempting a journey to Italy, where he was going. He offered me his protection, and represented to me that if I would permit him to wait on me, I might pass under the notion of a Venetian lady. In short, I ventured upon it, which has succeeded very well, though I met with more impediments in my journey than I expected. We went by sea to Genoa, where I made a very short stay, and

saw nobody, having no passport from that state, and fearing to be stopped, if I was known. We took post-chaises from thence the 16th of this month, and was very much surprised to meet, on the Briletta, the baggage of the Spanish army, with a prodigious number of sick and wounded soldiers and officers, who marched in a very great hurry. The count of Palazzo ordered his servants to say we were in haste for the service of Don Philip, and without further examination they gave us place every where; notwithstanding which the multitude of carriages and loaded mules which we met in these narrow roads made it impossible for us to reach Scravalli till it was near night. Our surprise was great to find, coming out of that town, a large body of troops surrounding a body of guards, in the midst of which was Don Philip in person, going a very round trot, looking down, and pale as ashes. The army was in too much confusion to take

notice of us, and the night favouring us, we got into the town, but when we came there, it was impossible to find any lodging, all the inns being filled with wounded Spaniards. The count went to the governor, and asked a chamber for a Venetian lady, which he granted very readily; but there was nothing in it but the bare walls, and in less than a quarter of an hour after the whole house was empty both of furniture and people, the governor flying into the citadel, and carrying with him all his goods and family. We were forced to pass the night without beds, or supper. About day-break the victorious Germans entered the town. The count went to wait on the generals, to whom, I believe, he had a commission. He told them my name, and there was no sort of honour or civility they did not pay me. They immediately ordered me a guard of hussars (which was very necessary in the present disorder), and sent me refreshments of all

kinds. Next day I was visited by the prince of Badin Dourlach, the prince Loüestien, and all the principal officers, with whom I passed for a heroine, shewing no uneasiness, though the cannon of the citadel (where was a Spanish garrison) played very briskly. I was forced to stay there two days for want of post-horses, the postmaster having fled, with all his servants, and the Spaniards having levied all the horses they could find. At length I set out from thence the 19th instant, with a strong escort of hussars, meeting with no farther accident on the road, except at the little town of Vogherra, where they refused post-horses, till the hussars drew their sabres. The 30th I arrived safe here. It is a very pretty place, where I intend to repose myself at least during the remainder of the summer. This journey has been very expensive; but I am very glad I have made it. I am now in a neutral country, under the protection of Venice. The doge

is our old friend Grimani, and I do not doubt meeting with all sort of civility. When I set out I had so bad a fluxion on my eyes, I was really afraid of losing them: they are now quite recovered, and my health better than it has been for some time. I hope yours continues good, and that you will always take care of it. Direct for me at Brescia by way of Venice.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Lourace, July 21, N. S. 1747.

DEAR CHILD,

I AM now in a place the most beautifully romantic I ever saw in my life: it is the Tunbridge of this part of the world, to which I was sent by the doctor's order, my ague often returning, notwithstanding the loads of bark I have taken. To say truth, I have no reason to repent my journey, though I was very unwilling to undertake it, it being ten miles, half by land, and half by water; the land so stony, I was almost shook to pieces, and I had the ill luck to be surprised with a storm on the lake, that if I had not been near a little port (where I passed a night in a very poor inn), the vessel must have been lost. A fair wind brought me hither next morning early. I found a very good lodging,

a great deal of good company, and a village in many respects resembling Tunbridge Wells, not only in the quality of the waters, which is the same, but in the manner of the buildings, most of the houses being separate at little distances, and all built on the sides of hills, which indeed are far different from those of Tunbridge, being six times as high: they are really vast rocks of different figures, covered with green moss, or short grass, diversified by tufts of trees, little woods, and here and there vineyards, but no other cultivation, except gardens like those on Richmond-hill. The whole lake of Isco, which is twenty-five miles long, and three broad, is all surrounded with these impassable mountains, the sides of which, towards the bottom, are so thick set with villages (and in most of them gentlemens' seats), that I do not believe there is any where above a mile distance one from another, which adds very much to the beauty of the prospect.

We have an opera here, which is performed three times in the week. I was at it last night, and should have been surprised at the neatness of the scenes, goodness of the voices, and justness of the actors, if I had not remembered I was in Italy. Several gentlemen jumped into the orchestre, and joined in the concert, which I suppose is one of the freedoms of the place, for I never saw it in any great town. I was yet more amazed, while the actors were dressing for the farce that concludes the entertainment, to see one of the principal among them, and as errant a *petit maître* as if he had passed all his life at Paris, mount the stage, and present us with a cantata of his own performing. He had the pleasure of being almost deafened with applause. The ball begun afterwards, but I was not witness of it, having accustomed myself to such early hours, that I was half asleep before the opera finished: it begins at ten o'clock, so that it was

one before I could get to bed, though I had supped before I went, which is the custom.

I am much better pleased with the diversions on the water, where all the town assembles every night, and never without music; but we have none so rough as trumpets, kettle-drums, and French horns: they are all violins, lutes, mandolins, and flutes doux. Here is hardly a man that does not excel in some of these instruments, which he privately addresses to the lady of his affections, and the public has the advantage of it, by his adding to the number of the musicians.

The fountain where we drink the waters rises between two hanging hills, and is overshadowed with large trees, that give a freshness in the hottest time of the day. The provisions are all excellent, the fish of the lake being as large and well tasted as that of Geneva, and the mountains abounding in game, particularly black cocks, which

I never saw in any other part of Italy: but none of the amusements here would be so effectual to raising my spirits as a letter from you. I have received none since that of February 27. I do not blame you for it, but my ill fortune, that will not let me have that consolation. The newspaper informs me that the chevalier Grey (so he is styled) is appointed minister at Venice. I wish you would let me know who he is, intending to settle our correspondence through his hands. I did not care to ask that favour of lord Holderness.

Dear child, I am ever your most affectionate mother.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, ——— 1747.

YOURS of the 1st of December, O. S. came to me this morning, Feb. 2, N. S. I hope your health continues good, since you say nothing to the contrary. I think the dutchess of Manchester's silence is the most reasonable part of her conduct; complainers are seldom pitied, and boasters are seldom believed. Her retirement is, in my opinion, no proof either of her happiness or discontent, since her appearance in the world can never be pleasing to her. I was shewn at Genoa an ode on Ch. Ch. as a production of Dr. Broxholme. I thought it much in his style, and am apt to believe (from what I know of Sir Charles Hanbury) he is more likely to have the vanity to father it, than the wit to write it. I have seen heaps of his poetry, but nothing

to distinguish him from the tribe of common versifiers. The last I saw was an ode addressed to Mr. Dodington on his courtship of the late dutchess of Argyll; those two you mention have never reached me. I should be very much obliged if you would send me copies of them.

The new opera at Brescia, I hear, is much applauded, and intend to see it before the end of the carnival. The people of this province are much at their ease during the miseries the war occasions their neighbours, and employ all their time in diversions.

We have hitherto had no winter, to the great sorrow of the people here, who are in fear of wanting ice in the summer, which is as necessary as bread. They also attribute a malignant fever, which has carried off great numbers in the neighbouring towns, to the uncommon warmth of the air. It has not infected this village, which they say has ever been free from any con-

tagious distemper. The method of treating the physician here, I think, should be the same every where: they make it his interest that the whole parish should be in good health, giving him a stated pension, which is collected by a tax on every house, on condition that he neither demands any fees, nor ever refuses a visit either to rich or poor. This last article would be very hard, if we had as many vapourish ladies as in England; but those imaginary ills are entirely unknown among us, and the eager pursuit after every new piece of quackery that is introduced. I cannot help thinking that there is a fund of credulity in mankind that must be employed somewhere, and the money formerly given to the monks for the health of the soul, is now thrown to doctors for the health of the body, and generally with as little prospect of success.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Brescia, Jan. 5, 1747-8.

DEAR CHILD,

I AM glad to hear that yourself and family are in good health; and as to the alteration you find in the world, it is only owing to your being better acquainted with it. I have never in all my various travels seen but two sorts of people, and those very like one another; I mean men and women, who always have been, and ever will be, the same. The same vices and the same follies have been the fruit of all ages, though sometimes under different names. I remember when I returned from Turkey meeting with the same affectation of youth among yours, and I do not doubt but your daughter will find the same, twenty years hence, among hers. One of the greatest happinesses of youth is the

ignorance of evil, though it is often the ground of great indiscretions, and sometimes the active part of life is over, before an honest mind finds out how one ought to act in such a world as this. I am as much removed from it as it is possible to be on this side the grave, which is from my own inclination, for I might have even here a great deal of company; the way of living in this province being, I believe, what it is in the sociable part of Scotland, and was in England a hundred years ago. I had a visit in the holidays of thirty horse of ladies and gentlemen, with their servants (by the way the ladies all ride like the late dutchess of Cleveland). They came with the kind intent of staying with me at least a fortnight, though I had never seen any of them before; but they were all neighbours within ten miles round. I could not avoid entertaining them at supper, and by good luck had a large quantity of game in the house, which, with the help

of my poultry, furnished out a plentiful table. I sent for the fiddles, and they were so obliging as to dance all night, and even dine with me the next day, though none of them had been in bed; and were much disappointed I did not ask them to stay, it being the fashion to go in troops to one another's houses, hunting and dancing together a month in each castle. I have not yet returned any of their visits, and I do not intend it for some time, to avoid this expensive hospitality. The trouble of it is not very great, they not expecting any ceremony. I left the room about one o'clock, and they continued their ball in the saloon above stairs, without being at all offended at my departure. But the greatest diversion I had was to see a lady of my own age comfortably dancing with her own husband, some years older; and I can assert that she jumped and gallopped with the best of them.

May you be as well satisfied with your

family as you are at present, and your children return in your age the tender care you have taken of their infancy. I know no greater happiness that can be wished for you by your most affectionate mother.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, July 17, N. S. 1748.

Yours of June 7, O. S. came to my hands but yesterday. I am very much vexed and surprised at the miscarriage of my letters. I have never failed answering both yours and my daughter's the very next post after I received them. I began to suspect my servants put the franking money in their pockets, and threw away the letters. I have been in the country this year and half, though I continued to date from Brescia, as the place to which I would have directed being, though not the nearest, the safest post-town: I send all my packets thither, and will for the future enclose them to a banker, who I hope will be more careful in forwarding them.

I am glad my daughter's conduct satis-

fies the opinion I always had of her understanding: I do not wonder at her being well received, in sets of company different from one another, having myself preserved a long intimacy with the dutchesses of Marlborough and Montagu, though they were at open war, and perpetually talking of their complaints. I believe they were both sensible. I never betrayed either, each of them giving me the strongest proofs of confidence in the last conversations I had with them, which were the last I had in England. What I think extraordinary is my daughter's continuing so many years agreeable to lord Bute, Mr. Mackensie telling me the last time I saw him that his brother frequently said among his companions, that he was still as much in love with his wife as before he married her. If the princess's favour lasts, it may be of use to her family. I have often been dubious if the seeming indifference of her highness's behaviour was owing to very

good sense, or great insensibility: should it be the first, she will get the better of all her rivals, and probably one day have a large share of power.

I am very much pleased that you accustom yourself to tea, being persuaded that the moderate use of it is generally wholesome. I have planted a great deal in my garden, which is a fashion lately introduced in this country, and has succeeded very well. I can not say it is as strong as the Indian, but it has the advantage of being fresher, and at least unmixed.

I thank you for the copies of sir Charles Hanbury's poetry, which extremely entertained me. I find tar water has succeeded to Ward's drop: it is possible by this time that some other quackery has taken place of that; the English are easier than any other nation infatuated by the prospect of universal medicines; nor is there any country in the world where the doctors raise such immense fortunes. I attribute

it to the fund of credulity which is in all mankind. We have no longer faith in miracles and reliques, and therefore, with the same fury, run after receipts and physicians: the same money which, three hundred years ago, was given for the health of the soul, is now given for the health of the body, and by the same sort of people, women and half-witted men: in the country where they have shrines and images, quacks are despised, and monks and confessors find their account in managing the fear and hope which rule the actions of the multitude.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Padua, September 16, 1748.

I AM informed that your health and sight are perfectly good, which gives me courage to trouble you with a letter of congratulation on a blessing that is equal to us both: I mean the great and good character I hear from every body of lord Bute. It is a satisfaction I never hoped to have—a son that does honour to his family. I am persuaded you are of my opinion, and had rather be related to him than to any silly duke in Christendom. Indeed, money (however considerable the sum) in the hands of a fool, is as useless as if presented to a monkey, and will as surely be scattered in the street. I need not quote examples. My daughter is also generally esteemed, and I cannot help communicating to you the pleasure I receive whenever I hear her

commended. I am afraid my letter may be too long. This subject runs away with me. I wish you many years continuance of the health and spirits I am told you now enjoy.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, Oct. 1, N. S. 1748

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE at length received the box, with the books enclosed, for which I give you many thanks, as they amused me very much. I gave a very ridiculous proof of it, fitter indeed for my grand-daughter than myself. I returned from a party on horseback; and after having rode twenty miles, part of it by moonshine, it was ten at night when I found the box arrived. I could not deny myself the pleasure of opening it; and falling upon Fielding's works, was fool enough to sit up all night reading. I think Joseph Andrews better than his Foundling. I believe I was the more struck with it, having at present a Fanny in my own house, not only by the name, which happens to be the same, but

the extraordinary beauty, joined with an understanding yet more extraordinary at her age, which is but few months past sixteen: she is in the post of my chambermaid. I fancy you will tax my discretion for taking a servant thus qualified; but my woman, who is also my housekeeper, was always teizing me with her having too much work, and complaining of ill health, which determined me to take her a deputy; and when I was at Louvere, where I drank the waters, one of the most considerable merchants there pressed me to take this daughter of his: her mother has an uncommon good character, and the girl has had a better education than is usual for those of her rank; she writes a good hand, and has been brought up to keep accounts, which she does to great perfection, and had herself such a violent desire to serve me, that I was persuaded to take her: I do not yet repent it from any part of her behaviour. But there has been no

peace in the family ever since she came into it, I might say the parish, all the women in it having declared open war with her, and the men endeavouring all treaties of a different sort: my own woman puts herself at the head of the first party, and her spleen is increased by having no reason for it. The young creature is never stirring from my apartment, always at her needle, and never complaining of any thing. You will laugh at this tedious account of my domestics (if you have patience to read it over), but I have few other subjects to talk of.

I am much pleased at your account of your children: may they ever be as agreeable to you as they are at present. The waters have very much mended my health. I endeavour to preserve it by constant riding, and am a better horsewoman than ever I was in my life, having complied with the fashion of this country, which is every way so much better than ours. I

cannot help being amazed at the obstinate folly by which the English ladies venture every day their lives and limbs.

My paper only allows me to add, I am your most affectionate mother.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Venice, Dec. 25, N. S. 1748.

I HOPE I have now regulated our correspondence in a manner more safe than by Holland. I have sent a large collection of letters to you and my daughter, which have all miscarried; neither have I had one line from either for some months.

I was surprised not many days ago by a very extraordinary visit: it was from the dutchess of Guastalla, who you know is a princess of the house d'Armstadt, and reported to be near marriage with the king of Sardinia. I confess it was an honour I could easily have spared, she coming attended with the greatest part of her court; her grand-master, who is brother to cardinal Valenti, the first lady of her bed-chamber, four pages, and a long et cetera of inferior servants, beside her guards. She

entered with an easy French air, and told me, since I would not oblige her by coming to her court, she was resolved to come to me, and eat a salad of my raising, having heard much fame of my gardening. You may imagine I gave her as good a supper as I could. She was (or seemed to be) extremely pleased with an English sack-posset of my ordering. I owned to her fairly that my house was much at her service; but it was impossible for me to find beds for all her suite. She said she intended to return when the moon rose, which was an hour after midnight. In the mean time I sent for the violins to entertain her attendants, who were very well pleased to dance, while she and her grand-master and I played at picquet. She pressed me extremely to return with her to her jointure-house, where she now resides (all the furniture of Guastalla being sold). I excused myself on not daring to venture in the cold night fifteen miles, but pro-

mised I would not fail to pay her my acknowledgments for the great honour her highness had done me, in a very short time, and we parted very good friends. She said she intended this spring to retire into her native country. I did not take the liberty of mentioning to her the report of her being in treaty with the king of Sardinia, though it has been in the newspaper of Mantua; but I found an opportunity of hinting it to Signor Gonzago, her grand-master, who told me the dutchess would not have been pleased to talk of it, since, perhaps, there was nothing in it more than a friendship that had long been between them, and since her widowhood the king sends her an express every day.

I believe you'll wish this long story much shorter; but I think you seemed to desire me to lengthen my letters, and I can have no greater pleasure than endeavouring to amuse you.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Gotolingo, April 24, 1749.

C. Mutius Sext: F.
P. Papilius M. F.
Q. Mutius P. F.
M. Cornelius P. F.
IIII vir. Turrim Ex D D.
Ad augendam Locavêre
Idemque Probavêre.

This is a very fair inscription, in large characters, on a large stone found in the pavement of the old church, and makes now a part of the wall of the new one, which is now building. The people here, who are as ignorant as their oxen, and live like them on the product of their land, without any curiosity for the history of it, would infer from thence that this town is of Roman foundation, though the walls,

which are yet the greatest part standing (only the towers and battlements demolished), are very plainly Gothic, and not one brick to be found any where of Roman fabric, which is very easily distinguished. I can easily believe their tradition, that the old church, which was pulled down two years ago, being ready to drop, was a pagan temple, and do not doubt it was a considerable town, founded by the Goths, when they overran Italy. The fortifications were strong for that age: the ditch still remaining within the walls being very broad and deep, in which ran the little river that is now before my house, and the moat turned into gardens for the use of the town, the name of which being Gotolengo, is a confirmation of my conjecture. The castle, which certainly stood on the spot where my house does, being on an eminence in the midst of the town, was probably destroyed by fire. When I ordered the court to be levelled, which

was grown uneven by long neglect, there was found such quantities of burnt bricks, that plainly shewed the remains of a considerable fire; but whether by the enemy, or accidental, I could get no information. They have no records, or parish-books, beyond the time of their coming under the Venetian dominion, which is not much above three hundred years ago, at which time they were, as they now are, a large village, being two miles in circuit, and contains at present (as the curate told me) two thousand communicants. The ladies of this neighbourhood that had given themselves the trouble and expence of going to see Don Philip's entry into Parma, are returned, according to the French saying, *avec un pied de nez.* As they had none of them ever seen a court before, they had figured to themselves prodigious scenes of gallantry and magnificence.

If I did not write by the post, I would tell you several particulars, that I believe

would make you laugh. He is retired into the country till the arrival of his princess, who is expected in May next. I take the liberty of inclosing this to lord Bute, not knowing where to direct to him in London.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, August 22, 1749.

DEAR CHILD,

WE are all very quiet here, all the *beau-monde* being hurried away to the fair at Bergamo, which is esteemed the best in Italy, after that of Senegallia. I was much pressed to go there by several parties; but would not fatigue myself with a journey of thirty miles. I am surprised at the account you give of London, yet can hardly suppose that there are not some rational creatures in it. The dutchess of Portland must be much altered if she is never out of a croud; and by the character of lady Middlesex,[1] who, I am told, is your most

[1] Miss Boyle, only daughter and heir of Richard earl of Shannon, mistress of the robes to the princess of Wales, afterward queen Caroline, and wife of Charles, earl of Middlesex.

intimate companion, I should guess her to be another that would prefer an easy conversation to the noise of an assembly. I very well remember Caenwood House,[2] and cannot wish you in a more agreeable place. It would be a great pleasure to me to see my grand children run about in the gardens. I do not question lord Bute's good taste in the improvements round it, or yours in the choice of the furniture. I have heard the fame of paper-hangings, and had some thoughts of sending for a suite, but was informed that they were as dear as damask is here, which put an end to my curiosity.

I am solicitous to see lord Bolingbroke's works. All the writings I have seen of his appeared to me to be copied from the French eloquence. I mean a poor or trite thought dressed in pompous language.

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[2] Caenwood House was rebuilt by the late lord chief justice Mansfield, from a design of Robert Adam.

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All weaknesses appear, as they increase, with age. I am afraid all humankind are born with the seeds of them, though they may be totally concealed, and consequently considerably lessened by education and philosophy. I have endeavoured to study and correct myself; and as courage was a favourite virtue, I studied to seem void of fear, and I believe was rather esteemed fool-hardy.

I am now grown timorous, and inclined to low spirits, whatever you may hear to the contrary. My cheerfulness is like the fire kindled in brush-wood, which makes a shew, but is soon turned to cold ashes. I do not, like madam Maintenon, grieve about the decay which is allotted to all mortals, but would willingly excuse myself to you.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Salo, Oct. 17, 1749.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of August 25, this morning, October 17, N. S. It was every way welcome to me, particularly finding you and your family in good health. You will think me a great rambler, being at present far distant from the date of my last letter. I have been persuaded to go to a palace near Salo, situate on the vast lake of Gardia, and do not repent my pains since my arrival, though I have passed a very bad road to it. It is indeed, take it altogether, the first place I ever saw: the king of France has nothing so fine, nor can have in his situation. It is large enough to entertain all his court, and much larger than the royal palace of Naples, or any of those of Germany or England. It was built by

the great Cosmo, duke of Florence, where he passed many months, for several years, on the account of his health, the air being esteemed one of the best in Italy. All the offices and conveniences are suitably magnificent; but that is nothing in regard to the beauties without doors. It is seated in that part of the lake which forms an amphitheatre, at the foot of a mountain, near three miles high, covered with a wood of orange, lemon, citron, and pomegranate trees, which is all cut into walks, and divided into terraces, that you may go into a several garden from every floor in the house diversified with fountains, cascades, and statues, and joined by easy marble stair-cases, which lead from one to another. There are many covered walks, where you are secure from the sun in the hottest part of the day, by the shade of the orange trees, which are so loaded with fruit, you can hardly have any notion of their beauty without seeing them: they

are as large as lime trees in England. You will think I say a great deal: I will assure you I say far short of what I see, and you must turn to the fairy tales to give you any idea of the real charms of this enchanting palace, for so it may justly be called. The variety of the prospects, the natural beauties, and the improvements by art, where no cost has been spared to perfect it, render it the most complete habitation I know in Europe. While the poor present master of it (to whose ancestor the grand duke presented it, having built it on his land), having spent a noble estate by gaming and other extravagance, would be glad to let it for a trifle, and is not rich enough to live in it. Most of the fine furniture is sold; there remains only a few of the many good pictures that adorned it, and such goods as were not easily to be transported, or for which he found no chapman. I have said nothing to you of the magnificent bath, embellished

with statues, or the fish-ponds, to the chief of which I go from my apartment on the first floor. It is circled by a marble balustrade, and supplied by water from a cascade that proceeds from the mouth of a whale, on which Neptune is mounted, surrounded with reeds: on each side of him are tritons, which, from their shells, pour out streams that augment the pond. Higher on the hill are three colossal statues of Venus, Hercules, and Apollo. The water is so clear, you see the numerous fish that inhabit it, and it is a great pleasure to me to throw them bread, which they come to the surface to eat with great greediness. I pass by many other fountains, not to make my description too tedious. You will wonder, perhaps, never to have heard any mention of this paradise either from our English travellers, or in any of the printed accounts of Italy: it is as much unknown to them as if it was guarded by a flaming cherubim. I attribute that ignorance, in

part, to its being twenty miles distant from any post-town, and also to the custom of the English, of herding together, avoiding the conversation of the Italians, who, on their side, are naturally reserved, and do not seek strangers. Lady Orford could give you some knowledge of it, having passed the last six months she staid here, in a house she hired at Salo; but as all her time was then taken up with the melancholy vapours her distresses had thrown her into, I question whether her curiosity ever engaged her to see this palace, though but half a mile from it.

October 25.

I was interrupted in this part of my letter by a visit from count Martinenghi, master of this house, with his son and two daughters: they staid till this morning, being determined to shew me all the fine places on this side the lake, to engage me

to grow fond of staying here, and I have had a very pleasant progress in viewing the most remarkable palaces within ten miles round. Three from hence is the little town of Maderna, where the last duke of Mantua built a retreat worthy a sovereign. It is now in the hands of a rich merchant, who maintains it in all its beauty. It is not half so large as that where I am, but perfectly proportioned and uniform, from a design of Palladio's. The garden is in the style of Le Notre, and the furniture in the best taste of Paris. I am almost ready to confess it deserves the preference to this, though built at far less expense. The situations are as different as is possible, when both of them are between a mountain and the lake: that under which the duke of Mantua chose to build is much lower than this, and almost steril; the prospect of it is rather melancholy than agreeable; but the palace, being placed at

the foot of it, is a mile distant from the lake, which forms a sort of peninsula, half a mile broad, and 'tis on that is the delightful garden, adorned with parterres, espaliers, all sort of exotic plants, and ends in a thick wood, cut into ridings; that in the midst is large enough for a coach, and terminates at the lake, which appears from the windows like a great canal made on purpose to beautify the prospect. On the contrary, the palace where I lodge is so near the water, that you step out of the gate into the barge, and the gardens being all divided, you cannot view from the house above one of them at a time. In short, these two palaces may in their different beauties rival each other, while they are neither of them to be excelled in any other part of the world.

I have wrote you a terrible long letter; but as you say you are often alone, it may serve you for half an hour's amusement;

at least receive it as a proof that there is none more agreeable to me than giving assurances of my being, dear child, your most affectionate mother,

MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Nov. 1, 1749.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of August 25, and my lord Bute's obliging notice of your safe delivery at the same time. I wish you joy of your young son, and of every thing else. You do not mention your father, by which I suppose he is not returned to England, and am in pain for his health, having heard but once from him since he left it, and know not whether he has received my letters. I dare say you need not be in any doubt of his good opinion of you; for my part, I am so far persuaded of the goodness of your heart, I have often had a mind to write you a consolatory epistle on my own death, which I believe will be some affliction, though my life is wholly useless to you. That part of

it which we passed together you have reason to remember with gratitude, though I think you misplace it; you are no more obliged to me for bringing you into the world, than I am to you for coming into it, and I never made use of that common-place (and like most common-place, false) argument, as exacting any return of affection. There was a mutual neceffity on us both to part at that time, and no obligation on either side. In the case of your infancy, there was so great a mixture of instinct, I can scarce even put that in the number of the proofs I have given you of my love; but I confess I think it a great one, if you compare my after conduct toward you with that of other mothers, who generally look on their children as devoted to their pleasures, and bound by duty to have no sentiments but what they please to give them; play-things at first, and afterwards the objects on which they may exercise their spleen, tyranny, or ill

humour. I have always thought of you in a different manner. Your happiness was my first wish, and the pursuit of all my actions, divested of all self-interest so far. I think you ought, and believe you do, remember me as your real friend. Absence and distance have not the power to lessen any part of my tenderness for you, which extends to all yours, and I am ever your most affectionate mother,

M. W. M.

I play at whist an hour or two every afternoon. The fashion here is to play for the collation, so that the losers have at least the consolation of eating part of their money.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Nov. 29, 1749.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED your agreeable letter of September 21, yesterday, November 29, and am very glad our daughter (for I think she belongs to us both) turns out so much to your satisfaction; may she ever do so. I hope she has by this time received my token. You please me extremely in saying my letters are of any entertainment to you. I would contribute to your happiness in every shape I can; but, in my solitude, there are so few subjects present themselves, it is not easy to find one that would amuse you, though, as I believe, you have some leisure hours at Caenwood, where anything new is welcome. I will venture to tell you a small history in which

I had some share. I have already informed you of the divisions and sub-divisions of estates in this country, by which you will imagine there is a numerous gentry of great names, and little fortunes; six of those families inhabit this town. You may fancy this forms a sort of society; but far from it, as there is not one of them that does not think (for some reason or other) they are far superior to all the rest; there is such a settled aversion among them, they avoid one another with the utmost care, and hardly ever meet except by chance at the castle (as they call my house), where their regard for me obliges them to behave civilly, but it is with an affected coldness that is downright disagreeable, and hinders me from seeing any of them often.

I was quietly reading in my closet, when I was interrupted by the chambermaid of the Signora Laura Bono, who flung herself at my feet, and, in an agony

of sobs and tears, begged me, for the love of the holy Madona, to hasten to her master's house, where the two brothers would certainly murder one another, if my presence did not stop their fury. I was very much surprised, having always heard them spoke of as a pattern of fraternal union. However, I made all possible speed thither, without staying for hoods or attendance, and was soon there, the house touching my garden-wall. I was directed to the bed-chamber by the noise of oaths and execrations; but, on opening the door, was astonished to a degree you may better guess than I describe, by seeing the Signora Laura prostrate on the ground, melting in tears, and her husband standing with a drawn stilletto in his hand, swearing she should never see to-morrow's sun. I was soon let into the secret. The good man, having business of consequence at Brescia, went thither early in the morning; but, as he expected his chief tenant

to pay his rent that day, he left orders with his wife, that if the farmer, who lived two miles off, came himself, or sent any of his sons, she should take care to make him very welcome. She obeyed him with great punctuality, the money coming in the hand of a handsome lad of eighteen: she did not only admit him to her own table, and produce the best wine in the cellar, but resolved to give him *chare entiere*. While she was exercising this generous hospitality, the husband met midway the gentleman he intended to visit, who was posting to another side of the country; they agreed on another appointment, and he returned to his own house, where, giving his horse to be led round to the stable by the servant that accompanied him, he opened his door with the *pass-par-tout* key, and proceeded to his chamber, without meeting any body, where he found his beloved spouse asleep on the bed, with her gallant. The opening of the door

waked them: the young fellow immediately leaped out of the window which looked into the garden, and was open, it being summer, and escaped over the fields, leaving his clothes on a chair by the bed-side—a very striking circumstance. In short, the case was such, I do not think the queen of fairies herself could have found an excuse, though Chaucer tells us she has made a solemn promise to leave none of her sex unfurnished with one, to all eternity. As to the poor criminal, she had nothing to say for herself but what I dare swear you will hear from the youngest daughter, if ever you catch her stealing of sweatmeats—"pray, pray, she would do so no more, and indeed it was the first time." This last article found no credit with me: I can not be persuaded that any woman who had lived virtuous till forty (for such is her age) could suddenly be endowed with such consummate impudence, to so-

licit a youth at first sight, there being no probability, his age and station considered, that he would have made any attempt of that kind. I must confess I was wicked enough to think the unblemished reputation she had hitherto maintained, and did not fail to put us in mind of, was owing to a series of such frolics; and to say truth, they are the only amours that can reasonably hope to remain undiscovered. Ladies that can resolve to make love thus *extempore*, may pass unobserved, especially if they can content themselves with low life, where fear may oblige their favourites to secrecy: there wants only a very lewd constitution, a very bad heart, and a moderate understanding, to make this conduct easy; and I do not doubt it has been practised by many prudes beside her I am now speaking of. You may be sure I did not communicate these reflections. The first word I spoke was to desire Signor

Carlo to sheath his poignard, not being pleased with its glittering: he did so very readily, begging my pardon for not having done it on my first appearance, saying he did not know what he did, and indeed he had the countenance and gesture of a man distracted. I did not endeavour a defence; that seemed to me impossible; but represented to him, as well as I could, the crime of a murder, which, if he could justify before men, was still a crying sin before God; the disgrace he would bring on himself and posterity, and the irreparable injury he would do his eldest daughter, a pretty girl of fifteen, that I knew he was extremely fond of. I added, that if he thought it proper to part from his lady, he might easily find a pretext for it some months hence; and that it was as much his interest as hers to conceal this affair from the knowledge of the world. I could not presently make him taste these reasons,

and was forced to stay there near five hours (almost from five to ten at night) before I durst leave them together, which I would not do till he had sworn in the most serious manner he would make no future attempt on her life. I was content with his oath, knowing him to be very devout, and found I was not mistaken. How the matter was made up between them afterwards I know not; but it is now two years since it happened, and all appearances remaining as if it had never been. The secret is in very few hands; his brother being at that time at Brescia, I believe knows nothing of it to this day. The chambermaid and myself have preserved the strictest silence, and the lady retains the satisfaction of insulting all her acquaintance on the foundation of a spotless character, that only she can boast in the parish, where she is most heartily hated, from these airs of impertinent virtue, and

another very essential reason, being the best dressed woman among them, though one of the plainest in her figure.

The discretion of the chambermaid in fetching me, which possibly saved her mistress's life, and her taciturnity since, I fancy appear very remarkable to you, and is what would certainly never happen in England. The first part of her behaviour deserves great praise; coming of her own accord, and inventing so decent an excuse for her admittance: but her silence may be attributed to her knowing very well that any servant who presumes to talk of his master, will most certainly be incapable of talking at all in a short time, their lives being entirely in the power of their superiors: I do not mean by law, but by custom, which has full as much force. If one of them was killed, it would either never be inquired into at all, or very slightly passed over; yet it seldom happens: I

know no instance of it, which I think is owing to the great submission of domestics, who are sensible of their dependance, and the national temper not being hasty, and never inflamed by wine, drunkenness being a vice abandoned to the vulgar, and spoke of with greater detestation than murder, which is mentioned with as little concern as a drinking bout in England, and is almost as frequent. It was extremely shocking to me at my first coming, and still gives me a sort of horror, though custom has in some degree familiarised it to my imagination. Robbery would be pursued with great vivacity, and punished with the utmost rigour, therefore is very rare, though stealing is in daily practice; but as all the peasants are suffered the use of fire-arms, the slightest provocation is sufficient to shoot, and they see one of their own species lie dead before them with as little remorse as a hare or a

partridge, and, when revenge spurs them on, with much more pleasure. A dissertation on this subject would engage me in a discourse not proper for the post.

Your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Dec. 17, N. S. 1749.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of October 14, but yesterday: the negligence of the post is very disagreeable. I have at length had a letter from lady Oxford, by which I find mine to her has miscarried, and perhaps the answer which I have now wrote may have the same fate.

I wish you joy of your young son: may he live to be a blessing to you. I find I amuse myself here in the same manner as if at London, according to your account of it; that is, I play at whist every night with some old priests that I have taught it to, and are my only companions. To say truth, the decay of my sight will no longer suffer me to read by candle light, and the evenings are now long and dark.

I believe you'll be persuaded my gaming makes nobody uneasy, when I tell you that we play only a penny per corner. 'Tis now a year that I have lived wholly in the country, and have no design of quitting it. I am entirely given up to rural amusements, and have forgot there are any such things as wits or fine ladies in the world. However, I am pleased to hear what happens to my acquaintance. I wish you would inform me what is become of the Pomfret family, and who [1] sir Francis Dashwood has married. I knew him at Florence: he seemed so nice in the choice of a wife, I have some curiosity to know who it is that has had charms enough to make him enter into an engagement he used to speak of with fear and trembling.

I am ever, dear child,

Your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY M.

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[1] He married Sarah, daughter and coheir of Thomas Gould, Esq. of Ivor, county of Bucks, and widow of sir Richard Ellis, Bart.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Brescia, Nov. 20, 1750.

I RECEIVED yours of October the 3d much sooner than I have done any others of late, although it had been opened. The great difference between the Venetian state, and that of the church, has been slightly mentioned in the newspapers. It is not yet thoroughly accommodated, though much softened, since I wrote. I am very glad of lord Bute's good fortune. I have wished my daughter joy in a long letter. I do not write so copiously to you, fearing it should be troublesome to your eyes. I sent some Italian poetry which has been much admired here. I wonder you do not imitate, at London, the wise conduct of this state, who, when they found the rage of play untameable, invented a method to turn it to the advantage of the

public—now fools lose their estates, and the government gains by it. The continuation of your health is my most fervent desire, and the news of it my greatest pleasure.

P. S. I have seen lately a history of the last years of queen Anne, by Swift. I should be very glad to know your opinion of it. Some facts are apparently false, and I believe others partially represented.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, December 14, 1750.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of October the 28th this morning, December 24th, N. S. I am afraid a letter of two sheets of paper that I sent you from Salo never came to your hands, which I am very sorry for: it would have been, perhaps, some entertainment, being the description of places that I am sure you have not found in any book of travels. I also made my hearty congratulations to lord Bute and yourself, on his place, which I hope is an earnest of future advantages. I desired you would send me all the books of which you gave a catalogue, except H. Fielding's and his sister's, which I have already. I thank God my taste still continues for the gay part of reading. Wiser people may think it tri-

fling, but it serves to sweeten life to me, and is at worst better than the generality of conversation. I am extremely pleased with the account you give me of your father's health: his life is the greatest blessing that can happen to his family. I am very sincerely touched with the dutchess of Montagu's misfortune,[1] though I think it no reasonable cause for locking herself up. Age and ugliness are as inseparable as heat and fire, and I think it all one in what shape one's figure grows disagreeable. I remember the princess of Moldavia at Constantinople made a party of pleasure the next day after losing one of her eyes; and when I wondered at her philosophy, said, she had more reason to divert herself than she had before. 'Tis true our climate is apt to inspire more melancholy ideas: the enlivening heat of the sun con-

[1] Lady Mary Churchill, youngest daughter of John duke of Marlborough, wife of John duke of Montagu, died May 4, 1751.

tinues the cheerfulness of youth to the grave with most people. I received a visit not long since from a fair young lady, that had new lain in of her nineteeth child: in reality she is but thirty-seven, and has so well preserved her fine shape and complexion, she appears little past twenty. I wish you the same good fortune, though not quite so numerous a posterity. Every happiness is ardently desired for you by (dear child) your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY M.

P. S. My compliments to Lord Bute, and blessings to all your little ones. I am ashamed not to have sent my token to my god-daughter; I hope to do it in a short time.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, April 2, N. S. 1751.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM very glad to hear of your health and recovery, being always uneasy 'till your danger is over. I wish you joy of your young son, and that you may have comfort in your numerous family.

I am not surprised to hear the duke of Kingston remains unmarried: he is, I fear, surrounded with people, whose interest it is he should continue so. I desire to know the name of his present inclination by the manner you speak of it: I suppose there is no occasion of the nicety of avoiding her name. I am sorry the prince[1] has an episcopal education: he cannot have a worse both for himself and the nation; though the court of England is no more personally

[1] His present majesty.

to me than the court of Pekin, yet I cannot help some concern for my native country, nor can I see any good purpose from church precepts, except they design him to take orders. I confess if I was king of Great Britain I would certainly be also archbishop of Canterbury; but I believe that is a refinement of politics that will never enter into the heads of our managers, though there is no other way of having supreme power in church and state. I could say a great deal in favour of this idea; but as neither you nor I will ever be consulted on the subject, I will not trouble you with my speculative notions.

I am very much pleased to hear of your father's good health. That every blessing may attend you is the earnest and sincere wish of, dear child, your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

April 15, N. S. 1751.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of Feb. 10th with great pleasure, as it brought me the news of your health, and that of your family. I cannot guess who you mean by lord Montfort,[1] there being no such title when I left England, nor any lord Hertford,[2] who I hear is named ambassador to France: these are all new people to me. I wish you would give me some information concerning them: none can be so agreeable as the continuation of your father's health; you see in him the good effect of a strict abstinence, and regular exercise. I am much pleased (but not at all surprised) at his

[1] Henry Bromley, created Baron Mountfort, 1741.

[2] Francis Seymour Conway, created earl of Hertford, 1750.

kindness to you: I know him to be more capable of a generous action than any man I ever knew. I have never heard one word of the books that you told me were packed up last June. These things are very provoking, but fretting mends nothing. I will continue to write on, though the uncertainty of your receiving my letters is a strong abatement of my pleasure in writing, and will be of heavy consequence to my style. I feel at this minute the spirit of dullness chill my heart, and I am ready to break out into alacks and alases, with many murmurs against my cruel destiny, that will not even permit this distant conversation between us, without such allaying circumstances. However, I beg you not to be discouraged. I am persuaded, from the goodness of your heart, that you are willing to give me happiness; and I can have none here so great as a letter from you. You can never want subjects; and I can assure you that your

eldest daughter cannot be more delighted with a birth-day suit, or your youngest with a paper of sugar-plumbs, than I am at the sight of your hand. You seem very anxious on the account of your children's education. I have said all I have to say on that head; and am still of the same opinion, that learning is necessary to the happiness of women, and ignorance the common foundation of their errors, both in morals and conduct. I was well acquainted with a lady (the dutchess of M***r), who, I am persuaded, owed all her misfortunes to the want of instruction in her youth. You know another, who, if she had had her natural good understanding cultivated by letters, would never have mistaken Johnny Gay for a wit, and much less have printed, that he took the liberty of calling her his Laura.[3]

I am pleasingly interrupted by the wel-

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[3] The dutchess of Queensberry.

come information from lord Bute that you are safely delivered of a son. I am never in pain for any of that sex. If they have any merit, there are so many roads for them to meet good fortune, they can no way fail but by not deserving it. We have but one of establishing ours, and that surrounded with precipices, and perhaps after all better missed than found. I have already told you I look on my grand-daughters as lay nuns. Lady —— might avoid that destiny, if religion was not a bar to her being disposed of in this country. You will laugh to hear it, but it is really true, I had proposed to me a young man of quality, with a good estate: his parents are both dead: she would find a fine palace, and neither want jewels nor equipage; and her name (with a present from me) be thought sufficient fortune.

I shall write to lord Bute this post. My blessing to you and yours is sincerely sent from your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, June 19, N. S. 1751.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM much obliged to lord Bute for thinking of me so kindly: to say truth, I am as fond of baubles as ever, and am so far from being ashamed of it, that it is a taste I endeavour to keep up with all the art I am mistress of. I should have despised them at twenty for the same reason that I would not eat tarts or cheesecakes at twelve years old, as being too childish for one capable of more solid pleasures. I now know (and alas! have long known) all things in this world are almost equally trifling, and our most serious projects have scarce more foundation than those edifices that your little ones raise in cards. You see to what

period the vast fortunes of the duke and dutchess of Marlborough, and sir Robert Walpole are soon arrived. I believe as you do, that lady Orford is a joyful widow, but am persuaded she has as much reason to weep for her husband as ever any woman has had, from Andromache to this day. I never saw any second marriage that did not appear to me very ridiculous: hers is accompanied with circumstances that render the folly complete.

Sicknesses have been very fatal in this country, as well as England. I should be glad to know the names of those you say are deceased: I believe I am ignorant of half of them, the Dutch news being forbid here. I would not have you give yourself the trouble, but order one of your servants to transcribe the catalogue. You will perhaps laugh at this curiosity. If you ever return to Bute, you will find, that what happens in the world is a considerable

amusement in solitude. The people I see here make no more impression on my mind than the figures in the tapestry, while they are directly before my eyes. I know one is clothed in blue, and another in red; but out of sight, they are so entirely out of memory, I hardly remember whether they are tall or short. I sometimes call myself to account for this insensibility, which has something of ingratitude in it, this little town thinking themselves highly honoured and obliged by my residence: they intended me an extraordinary mark of it, having determined to set up my statue in the most conspicuous place: the marble was bespoke, and the sculptor bargained with, before I knew any thing of the matter; and it would have been erected without my knowledge, if it had not been necessary for him to see me to take the resemblance. I thanked them very much for the intention; but utterly

refused complying with it, fearing it would be reported (at least in England) that I had set up my own statue. They were so obstinate in the design, I was forced to tell them my religion would not permit it. I seriously believe it would have been worshipped, when I was forgotten, under the name of some saint or other, since I was to have been represented with a book in my hand, which would have passed for a proof of canonization. This compliment was certainly founded on reasons not unlike those that first famed goddesses, I mean being useful to them, in which I am second to Ceres. If it be true she taught the art of sowing wheat, it is certain I have learned them to make bread, in which they continued in the same ignorance Misson complains of (as you may see in his letter from Padnor). I have introduced French rolls, custards, minced pies, and plumb pudding, which they are very

fond of. 'Tis impossible to bring them to conform to sillabub, which is so unnatural a mixture in their eyes, they are even shocked to see me eat it: but I expect immortality from the science of butter making, in which they are become so skilful from my instructions. I can assure you here is as good as in any part of Great Britain. I am afraid I have bragged of this before; but when you do not answer any part of my letters, I suppose them lost, which exposes you to some repetitions. Have you received that I wrote on my first notice of the prince's death? I shall receive lord Bute's china with great pleasure. The pearl necklace for my god-daughter has been long packed up for her, I wish I could say, sent. In the mean time give her, and the rest of yours, my blessing; with thanks and compliments to lord Bute, from your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY M.

P. S. I desire you would order the china to be packed up by some skilful man of the trade, or I shall receive it in pieces.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, June 20, N. S. 1751.

I RECEIVED yours of May the 9th, yesterday, with great satisfaction, finding in it an amendment of your health. I am not surprised at lady Orford's [1] folly, having known her at Florence: she made great court to me. She has parts, and a very engaging manner. Her company would have amused me very much, but I durst not indulge myself in it, her character being in universal horror. I do not mean from her gallantries, which nobody trouble their heads with, but she had a collection of free-thinkers that met weekly at her

[1] Margaret, daughter and heir of Samuel Rolle, esq. of Haynton, county of Devon, and relict of Robert, second earl of Orford, who died in 1751, married the honourable Sewallis Shirley in the same year. She resided principally at Florence.

house to the scandal of all good christians. She invited me to one of these honourable assemblies, which I civilly refused, not desiring to be thought of her opinion, nor thinking it right to make a jest of ordinances that are (at least) so far sacred, as they are absolutely necessary in all civilized governments; and it is being in every sense an enemy to mankind, to endeavour to overthrow them. Tar water is arrived in Italy. I have been asked several questions concerning the use of it in England. I do not find it makes any great progress here; the doctors confine it to a possibility of being useful in the cure of inward ulcers, and allow it no farther merit. I told you, some time ago, the method in this country of making it the interest of the physicians to keep the town in good health. I wish that, and the Roman law concerning last testaments, were imported for the good of England: I know no foreign fashion or quackery that would be so

useful among us. I have wrote a long letter to my daughter this post; I cannot help fearing for her. Time and distance have increased, and not diminished, my tenderness for her. I own it is stronger than my philosophy: my reason agrees with Atticus, but my passions are the same with Tully's.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, July 23, 1751.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yesterday, July 22, N. S. yours of June 2d. I own I could not help regretting the dutchess of Montague (with whom I have passed many agreeable hours), though I think I am in the wrong in so doing, being persuaded her life was grown burthensome to her, and I believe she would not own herself in danger to avoid the remedies that would have been pressed upon her. I am not surprised at lady Orford's marriage: her money was, doubtless, convenient to Mr. Shirley, and I dare swear she piques herself on not being able to refuse him any thing. It has been her way with all her lovers: he is the most creditable of any she ever had: his birth and sense will induce him to behave to her

with decency, and it is what she has not been much used to. As it is a true saying, "*Cowards more blows than any hero bear*;" it is as certainly true, ladies of pleasure (very improperly so called) suffer more mortifications than any nun of the most austere order that ever was instituted. Lady Orford is a shining instance of that truth; the most submissive wife to the most tyrannic husband that ever was born, is not such a slave as I saw her at Florence. I have hardly ever seen engagements of that sort on another footing. Contempt is joined with intimacy in those cases, and there are few men that do not indulge the malignity that is in human nature, when they can do it (as they fancy) juſtifiably.

I have had a return, though in a less degree, of the distemper I had last year, and am afraid I must go again to the waters of Louvere. The journey is so disagreeable I would willingly avoid it; and I have little taste for the diversions of the place.

August 1.

Thus far of my letter was wrote at Gotolengo, and it is concluded at Louvere, where the doctors have dragged me. I find much more company than ever. I have done by these waters as I formerly did by those at Islington: you may remember when I first carried you there, we scarce saw any but ourselves, and in a short time we could hardly find room for the crowd. I arrived but last night, so can say nothing of my success in relation to my health. I must end my letter in a hurry: here is company; and I can only say I am ever your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Nov. 2, 1751.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM always pleased when I hear you have been with the duke and dutchess of Portland, being persuaded they are both worthy and sincere friends of yours. I had wrote so many letters to dear lady Oxford without receiving any answer, that I was in great pain on her account. I will write again, though I lose so much of my writing: I am afraid it will only be more time and paper thrown away. I pity poor lady D***, who, perhaps, thinks herself at present an object of envy: she will be soon undeceived: no rich widow can marry on prudential motives; and where passion is only on one side, every marriage must be miserable. If she thought justly, she would know that no man ever was in love with a

woman of forty, since the deluge: a boy may be so; but that blaze of straw only lasts till he is old enough to distinguish between youth and age, which generally happens about seventeen: till that time the whole sex appears angelic to a warm constitution; but as that is not Mr. T***'s case, all she can hope is a cold complaisance, founded on gratitude, which is the most uncertain of all foundations for a lasting union. I know not how it is, whether obligers are apt to exact too large returns, or whether human pride naturally hates to remember obligation, but I have seldom seen friendships continue long, where there has been great benefits conferred; and I should think it the severest suffering to know I was a burden on the good nature of a man I loved, even if I met a mind so generous as to dissemble a disgust which he could not help feeling. Lady D*** had fond parents, and, as I have heard, an obliging husband. Her sorrowful hours are now

coming on; they will be new to her, and 'tis a cruel addition to reflect (as she must do) that they have been her own purchasing. I wish my favourite lady Mary Coke may make use of her bitter experience to escape the snares laid for her: they are so various and so numerous, if she can avoid them, I shall think she has some supernatural assistance, and her force more wonderful than any of Don Quixotte there, though they vanquished whole armies by the strength of a single lance.

I have sent lady —— a little ring: if it comes safe, I will find something for lady ——: I expect a letter of thanks. I think I have ill luck if none of my grand-daughters have a turn for writing: she that has, will be distinguished by me. I have sent you three bills of exchange: it does not appear you have received one; what method to take I cannot imagine: I must depend on my new friend, who is a merchant of the Valterine. If the war breaks

out, difficulties will increase; though our correspondence can hardly be more interrupted than it is already. I must endure it as set down by destiny in the long list of mortifications allotted to,

Dear child,

Your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, Nov. 10, N. S. 1751.

I RECEIVED yours of October 10 this day, which is much quicker than any I ever had from England. I will not make any reflections on the conduct of the person you mention; 'tis a subject too melancholy to us both. I am of opinion tallying at Bassette is a certain revenue (even without cheating) to those that can get constant punters, and are able to submit to the drudgery of it; but I never knew any one pursue it long, and preserve a tolerable reputation. The news of the recovery of your health makes me amends for the displeasure of hearing his ill figure.

I have often read and been told that the air of Hungary is better, and the inhabitants in general longer lived, than in any other part of Europe. You have given

me a very surprising instance of it, far surpassing in age the old woman of Louvere, though, in some circumstances, I think her story as extraordinary. She died but ten years ago; and it is well remembered by the inhabitants of that place, the most creditable of whom have all assured me of the truth of the following facts:—She kept the greatest inn there till past fifty: her husband then dying, and she being rich, she left off that trade; and having a large house, with a great deal of furniture, she let lodgings, which her daughters (two maids past seventy) still continue. I lodged with them the first year of my going to those waters. She lived to one hundred years, with good health; but in the last five years of it, fell into the decays common to that period—dimness of sight, loss of teeth, and baldness; but in her hundredth year, her sight was totally restored, she had a new set of teeth, and a fresh head of brown hair. I

mentioned it to several ladies, who none of them had heard it, but the rest was confirmed to me by every body. She lived in this renewed vigour ten years, and then had her picture drawn, which has a vivacity in the eyes and complexion that would become five and twenty, though, by the falls in the face, one may discern it was drawn for a very old person. She died merely of an accident, which would have killed any other—tumbling down a very bad stone stair-case, which goes into the cellar, she broke her head in such a manner, she lived but two days. The physician and surgeon who attended her told me that her age no way contributed to her death. I inquired whether there was any singularity in her diet, but heard of none, excepting that her breakfast was every morning a large quantity of bread sopped in cold water. The common food of the peasants in this country is the Turkish wheat you mention, which they dress

in various manners, but use little milk, it being chiefly reserved for cheese, or the tables of the gentry. I have not observed either among the poor or rich, that in general they live longer than in England. This woman of Louvere is always spoken of as a prodigy; and I am surprised she is neither called saint nor witch, being very prodigal of those titles.

I return you many thanks for the length of your entertaining letter; but am very sorry it was troublesome to you to write it. I wish the reading of this may not be so. I will seek for a picture for lord Bute.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Dec. 8, N. S. 1751.

MY DEAR CHILD,

THIS town is at present in a general stare, or, to use their own expression, *sotto sopra*; and not only this town, but the capital, Bergamo, the whole province, the neighbouring Brescian, and perhaps all the Venetian dominion, occasioned by an adventure exactly resembling, and I believe copied from Pamela. I know not under what constellation that foolish stuff was wrote, but it has been translated into more languages than any modern performance I ever heard of. No proof of its influence was ever stronger than this present story, which, in Richardson's hands, would serve very well to furnish out seven or eight volumes. I shall make it as short as I can.

Here is a gentleman's family, consisting of an old batchelor and his sister, who have fortune enough to live with great elegance, though without any magnificence, possessed of the esteem of all their acquaintance, he being distinguished by his probity, and she by her virtue. They are not only suffered but sought after by all the best company, and indeed are the most conversable and reasonable people in the place. She is an excellent house-wife, and particularly remarkable for keeping her pretty house as neat as any in Holland. She appears no longer in public, being past fifty, and passes her time chiefly at home with her work, receiving few visitants. This Signora Diana, about ten years since, saw, at a monastery, a girl of eight years old, who came thither to beg alms for her mother. Her beauty, though covered with rags, was very observable, and gave great compassion to the charitable lady, who thought it meritorious to rescue such a modest

sweetness as appeared in her face from the ruin to which her wretched circumstances exposed her. She asked her some questions, to which she answered with a natural civility that seemed surprising; and finding the head of her family (her brother) to be a cobler, who could hardly live by that trade, she bid the child follow her home; and sending for her parent, proposed to her to breed the little Octavia for her servant. This was joyfully accepted, the old woman dismissed with a piece of money, and the girl remained with the Signora Diana, who bought her decent clothes, and took pleasure in teaching her whatever she was capable of learning. She learned to read, write, and cast accounts, with uncommon facility; and had such a genius for work, that she excelled her mistress in embroidery, point, and every operation of the needle. She grew perfectly skilled in confectionary, had a good insight into cookery, and was a great proficient in dis-

tillery. To these accomplishments she was so handy, well bred, humble, and modest, that not only her master and mistress, but every body that frequented the house took notice of her. She lived thus near nine years, never going out but to church. However, beauty is as difficult to conceal as light; her's begun to make a great noise. Signora Diana told me she observed an unusual concourse of pedling women that came on pretext to sell penny-worths of lace, china, &c. and several young gentlemen, very well powdered, that were perpetually walking before her door, and looking up at the windows. These prognostics alarmed her prudence, and she listened very willingly to some honourable proposals that were made by many honest thriving tradesmen. She communicated them to Octavia, and told her, that though she was sorry to lose so good a servant, yet she thought it right to advise her to choose a husband. The girl answered

modestly, that it was her duty to obey all her commands, but she found no inclination to marriage; and if she would permit her to live single, she should think it a greater obligation than any other she could bestow. Signora Diana was too conscientious to force her into a state from which she could not free her, and left her to her own disposal. However, they parted soon after: whether (as the neighbours say) Signor Aurelio Ardinghi, her brother, looked with too much attention on the young woman, or that she herself (as Diana says) desired to seek a place of more profit, she removed to Bergamo, where she soon found preferment, being strongly recommended by the Ardinghi family. She was advanced to be first waiting-woman to an old countess, who was so well pleased with her service, she desired, on her death bed, count Jeronimo Sosi, her son, to be kind to her. He found no repugnance to this act of obedience, having

distinguished the beautiful Octavia, from his first sight of her; and during the six months that she had served in the house, had tried every art of a fine gentleman, accustomed to victories of that sort, to vanquish the virtue of this fair virgin. He has a handsome figure, and has had an education uncommon in this country, having made the tour of Europe, and brought from Paris all the improvements that are to be picked up there, being celebrated for his grace in dancing, and skill in fencing and riding, by which he is a favourite among the ladies, and respected by the men. Thus qualified for conquest, you may judge of his surprise at the firm yet modest resistance of this country girl, who was neither to be moved by address, nor gained by liberality, nor on any terms would be prevailed on to stay as his housekeeper, after the death of his mother. She took that post in the house of an old judge, where she continued to be solicited by the

emissaries of the count's passion, and found a new persecutor in her master, who, after three months endeavour to corrupt her, offered her marriage. She chose to return to her former obscurity, and escaped from his pursuit, without asking any wages, and privately returned to the Signora Diana. She threw herself at her feet, and, kissing her hands, begged her with tears to conceal her at least some time, if she would not accept of her service. She protested she had never been happy since she left it. While she was making these submissions, Signor Aurelio entered. She intreated his intercession on her knees, who was easily persuaded to consent she should stay with them, though his sister blamed her highly for her precipitate flight, having no reason, from the age and character of her master, to fear any violence, and wondered at her declining the honour he offered her. Octavia confessed that perhaps she had

been too rash in her proceedings, but said, that he seemed to resent her refusal in such a manner as frightened her; she hoped that after a few days search he would think no more of her; and that she scrupled entering into the holy bands of matrimony, where her heart did not sincerely accompany all the words of the ceremony. Signora Diana had nothing to say in contradiction to this pious sentiment; and her brother applauded the honesty which could not be perverted by any interest whatever. She remained concealed in their house, where she helped in the kitchen, cleaned the rooms, and redoubled her usual diligence and officiousness. Her old master came to Louvere on pretence of adjusting a law-suit, three days after, and made private inquiry after her; but hearing from her mother and brother (who knew nothing of her being here) that they had never heard of her, he concluded she had

taken another route, and returned to Bergamo; and she continued in this retirement near a fortnight.

Last Sunday, as soon as the day was closed, arrived at Signor Aurelio's door, a handsome equipage in a large coach, attended by four well armed servants on horseback. An old priest stepped out of it, and desiring to speak with Signora Diana, informed her he came from the count Jeronimo Losi, to demand Octavia; that the count waited for her at a village four miles from hence, where he intended to marry her; and had sent him, who was engaged to perform the divine rite, that Signora Diana might resign her to his care without any difficulty. The young damsel was called for, who intreated she might be permitted the company of another priest with whom she was acquainted: this was readily granted; and she sent for a young man that visits me very often, being remarkable for his sobriety and learning,

Meanwhile a valet de chambre presented her with a box, in which was a complete genteel undress for a lady. Her laced linen and fine night gown were soon put on, and away they marched, leaving the family in a surprise not to be described.

Signor Aurelio came to drink coffee with me next morning: his first words were, he had brought me the history of Pamela. I said, laughing, I had been tired with it long since. He explained himself by relating this story, mixed with great resentment for Octavia's conduct. Count Jeronimo's father had been his ancient friend and patron; and this escape from his house (he said) would lay him under a suspicion of having abetted the young man's folly, and perhaps expose him to the anger of all his relations, for contriving an action he would rather have died than suffered, if he had known how to prevent it. I easily believed him, there appearing a latent jealousy under his affliction, that

shewed me he envied the bridegroom's happiness, at the same time he condemned his extravagance.

Yesterday noon, being Saturday, Don Joseph returned, who has got the name of parson Williams by this expedition: he relates, that when the bark which carried the coach and train arrived, they found the amorous count waiting for his bride on the bank of the lake: he would have proceeded immediately to the church; but she utterly refused it, till they had each of them been at confession; after which the happy knot was tied by the parish priest. They continued their journey, and came to their palace at Bergamo in a few hours, where every thing was prepared for their reception. They received the communion next morning, and the count declares that the lovely Octavia has brought him an inestimable portion, since he owes to her the salvation of his soul. He has renounced play, at which he had lost a great deal of

time and money. She has already retrenched several superfluous servants, and put his family into an exact method of economy, preserving all the splendor necessary to his rank. He has sent a letter in his own hand to her mother, inviting her to reside with them, and subscribing himself her dutiful son: but the countess has sent another privately by Don Joseph, in which she advises the old woman to stay at Louvere, promising to take care she shall want nothing, accompanied with a token of twenty sequins,[1] which is at least nineteen more than ever she saw in her life.

I forgot to tell you that from Octavia's first serving the old lady, there came frequent charities in her name to her poor parent, which nobody was surprised at, the lady being celebrated for pious works, and Octavia known to be a great favourite

[1] About ten guineas English.

with her. It is now discovered that they were all sent by the generous lover, who has presented Don Joseph very handsomely, but he has brought neither letter nor message to the house of Ardinghi, which affords much speculation.

I am afraid you are heartily tired with this tedious tale. I will not lengthen it with reflections, as I fancy yours will be the same as mine.

With mine all these adventures proceed from artifice on one side and weakness on the other. An honest, tender mind is often betrayed to ruin by the charms that make the fortune of a designing head, which, when joined with a beautiful face, can never fail of advancement, except barred by a wise mother, who locks up her daughters from view till nobody cares to look on them. My poor friend the dutchess of Bolton[2] was educated in solitude,

[2] Lady Anne Vaughan, daughter and heir of John earl of Carberry, married Charles duke of Bolton in 1713, and died in 1751.

with some choice of books, by a saint-like governess: crammed with virtue and good qualities, she thought it impossible not to find gratitude, though she failed to give passion; and upon this plan threw away her estate, was despised by her husband, and laughed at by the public. Polly,[3] bred in an alehouse, and produced on the stage, has obtained wealth and title, and found the way to be esteemed. So useful is early experience—without it half of life is dissipated in correcting the errors that we have been taught to receive as indisputable truths.

I am ever your truly affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

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[3] Lavinia Fenton, the celebrated "Polly," in Gay's Beggar's Opera, afterward the second dutchess of Bolton.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Jan. 10, 1752.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM extremely concerned to hear you complain of ill health, at a time of life when you ought to be in the flower of your strength. I hope I need not recommend to you the care of it: the tenderness you have for your children is sufficient to enforce you to the utmost regard for the preservation of a life so necessary to their well being. I do not doubt your prudence in their education; neither can I say any thing particular relating to it at this distance, different tempers requiring different management. In general, never attempt to govern them (as most people do) by deceit: if they find themselves cheated, even in trifles, it will so far lessen the authority of their instructor, as to make

them neglect all their future admonitions; and, if possible, breed them free from prejudices: those contracted in the nursery often influence the whole life after, of which I have seen many melancholy examples. I shall say no more of this subject, nor would have said this little if you had not asked my advice: 'tis much easier to give rules than to practise them. I am sensible my own natural temper is too indulgent: I think it the least dangerous error, yet still it is an error. I can only say with truth, that I do not know in my whole life having ever endeavoured to impose on you, or give a false colour to any thing that I represented to you. If your daughters are inclined to love reading, do not check their inclination by hindering them of the diverting part of it; it is as necessary for the amusement of women as the reputation of men; but teach them not to expect or desire any applause from it. Let their brothers shine, and let them

content themselves with making their lives easier by it, which I experimentally know is more effectually done by study than any other way. Ignorance is as much the fountain of vice as idleness, and indeed generally produces it. People that do not read or work for a livelihood have many hours they know not how to employ, especially women, who commonly fall into vapours, or something worse. I am afraid you'll think this letter very tedious: forgive it as coming from your most affectionate mother,

M. W.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

1752.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yesterday, Feb. 15, N. S. the case of books you were so good to send to me: the entertainment they have already given me has recompensed me for the long time I expected them. I begun by your direction with Peregrine Pickle. I think lady Vane's memoirs contain more truth and less malice than any I ever read in my life. When she speaks of her own being disinterested, I am apt to believe she really thinks herself so, as many highwaymen, after having no possibility of retrieving the character of honesty, please themselves with that of being generous, because whatever they get on the road, they always spend at the next ale-house, and are still as beggarly as ever. Her history, rightly

considered, would be more instructive to young women than any sermon I know. They may see there what mortifications and variety of misery are the unavoidable consequences of gallantry. I think there is no rational creature that would not prefer the life of the strictest carmelite to the round of hurry and misfortune she has gone through. Her style is clear and concise, with some strokes of humour, which appear to me so much above her, I can't help being of opinion the whole has been modelled by the author of the book in which it is inserted, who is some subaltern admirer of hers. I may judge wrong, she being no acquaintance of mine, though she has married two of my relations. Her first wedding was attended with circumstances that made me think a visit not at all necessary, though I disobliged lady Susan by neglecting it; and her second, which happened soon after, made her so

near a neighbour, that I rather chose to stay the whole summer in town than partake of her balls and parties of pleasure, to which I did not think it proper to introduce you; and had no other way of avoiding it, without incurring the censure of a most unnatural mother for denying you diversions, that the pious lady Ferrers permitted to her exemplary daughters. Mr. Shirley has had uncommon fortune in making the conquest of two such extraordinary ladies, equal in their heroic contempt of shame, and eminent above their sex, the one for beauty, and the other wealth, both which attract the pursuit of all mankind, and have been thrown into his arms with the same unlimited fondness. He appeared to me gentle, well bred, well shaped, and sensible; but the charms of his face and eyes, which lady Vane describes with so much warmth, were, I confess, always invisible to me, and the artifi-

cial part of his character very glaring, which I think her story shews in a strong light.

The next book I laid my hand on was the Parish Girl, which interested me enough not to be able to quit it till it was read over, though the author has fallen into the common mistake of romance. Writers intending a virtuous character, and not knowing how to draw it, the first step of his heroine (leaving her patroness's house) being altogether absurd and ridiculous, justly entitling her to all the misfortunes she met with. Candles came, and my eyes grown weary; I took up the next book, merely because I supposed from the title it could not engage me long: it was Pompey the Little, which has really diverted me more than any of the others, and it was impossible to go to bed till it was finished. It is a real and exact representation of life, as it is now acted in London, as it was in my time, and as it will

be (I do not doubt) a hundred years hence, with some little variation of dress, and perhaps of government. I found there many of my acquaintance. Lady T. and lady O. are so well painted, I fancied I heard them talk, and have heard them say the very things there repeated. I also saw myself (as I now am) in the character of Mrs. Qualmsick. You will be surprised at this, no English woman being so free from vapours, having never in my life complained of low spirits, or weak nerves; but our resemblance is very strong in the fancied loss of appetite, which I have been silly enough to be persuaded into by the physician of this place. He visits me frequently, as being one of the most considerable men in the parish, and is a grave, sober, thinking, great fool, whose solemn appearance, and deliberate way of delivering his sentiments, gives them an air of good sense, though they are often the most injudicious that ever were pronounced. By perpetual

telling me I eat so little, he is amazed I am able to subsist. He had brought me to be of his opinion; and I begun to be seriously uneasy at it. This useful treatise has roused me into a recollection of what I eat yesterday, and do almost every day the same. I wake generally about seven, and drink half a pint of warm asses' milk, after which I sleep two hours; as soon as I am risen, I constantly take three cups of milk coffee, and two hours after that a large cup of milk chocolate: two hours more brings my dinner, where I never fail swallowing a good dish (I don't mean plate) of gravy soup, with all the bread, roots, &c. belonging to it. I then eat a wing and the whole body of a large fat capon, and a veal sweetbread, concluding with a competent quantity of custard, and some roasted chesnuts. At five in the afternoon I take another dose of asses' milk; and for supper twelve chesnuts (which would weigh two of those in London),

one new laid egg, and a handsome poringer of white bread and milk. With this diet, notwithstanding the menaces of my wise doctor, I am now convinced I am in no danger of starving; and am obliged to little Pompey for this discovery.

I opened my eyes this morning on Leonora, from which I defy the greatest chymist in morals to extract any instruction. The style is most affectedly florid, and naturally insipid, with such a confused heap of admirable characters, that never are, or can be, in human nature. I flung it aside after fifty pages, and laid hold of Mrs. Philips, where I expected to find at least probable, if not true facts, and was not disappointed. There is a great similitude in the genius and adventures (the one being productive of the other), between madam Constantia and lady Vane: the first mentioned has the advantage in birth, and, if I am not mistaken, in understanding: they have both had scandalous law-suits with

their husbands, and are endowed with the same intrepid assurance. Constantia seems to value herself also on her generosity, and has given the same proofs of it. The parallel might be drawn out to be as long as any of Plutarch's; but I dare swear you are already heartily weary of my remarks, and wish I had not read so much in so short a time, that you might not be troubled with my comments; but you must suffer me to say something of the polite Mr. S***, whose name I should never have guessed by the rapturous description his mistress makes of his person, having always looked upon him as one of the most disagreeable fellows about town, as odious in his outside as stupid in his conversation, and I should as soon have expected to hear of his conquests at the head of an army as among women; yet he has been, it seems, the darling favourite of the most experienced of the sex, which shews me I am a very bad judge of merit. But

I agree with Mrs. Philips, that however profligate she may have been, she is infinitely his superior in virtue; and if her penitence is as sincere as she says, she may expect their future fate to be like that of Dives and Lazarus.

This letter is of a most immoderate length. It will find you at Caenwood: your solitude there will permit you to peruse, and even to forgive, all the impertinence of your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, June 23, N. S. 1752.

Soon after I wrote my last letter to my dear child, I was seized with so violent a fever, accompanied with so many bad symptoms, my life was despaired of by the physician of Gottolengo, and I prepared myself for death with as much resignation as that circumstance admits: some of my neighbours, without my knowledge, sent express for the doctor of this place, whom I have mentioned to you formerly as having uncommon secrets. I was surprised to see him at my bedside. He declared me in great danger, but did not doubt my recovery, if I was wholly under his care; and his first prescription was transporting me hither: the other physician asserted positively I should die on the

road. It has always been my opinion that it is a matter of the utmost indifference where we expire, and I consented to be removed. My bed was placed on a brancard; my servants followed in chaises; and in this equipage I set out. I bore the first day's journey of fifteen miles without any visible alteration. The doctor said as I was not worse I was certainly better; and the next day proceeded twenty miles to Isco, which is at the head of this lake. I lay each night at noblemens' houses, which were empty. My cook, with my physician, always preceded two or three hours, and I found my chamber and all necessaries ready prepared with the exactest attention. I was put into a bark in my litter bed, and in three hours arrived here. My spirits were not at all wasted (I think rather raised) by the fatigue of my journey. I drank the water next morning, and, with a few doses of my physician's prescription, in three days found myself in

perfect health, which appeared almost a miracle to all that saw me. You may imagine I am willing to submit to the orders of one that I must acknowledge the instrument of saving my life, though they are not entirely conformable to my will and pleasure. He has sentenced me to a long continuance here, which, he says, is absolutely necessary to the confirmation of my health, and would persuade me that my illness has been wholly owing to my omission of drinking the waters these two years past. I dare not contradict him, and must own he deserves (from the various surprising cures I have seen) the name given him in this country of the miraculous man. Both his character and practice are so singular, I cannot forbear giving you some account of them. He will not permit his patients to have either surgeon or apothecary: he performs all the operations of the first with great dexterity, and whatever compounds he gives,

he makes in his own house; those are very few: the juice of herbs, and these waters, being commonly his sole prescriptions. He has very little learning, and professes drawing all his knowledge from experience, which he possesses, perhaps, in a greater degree than any other mortal, being the seventh doctor of his family, in a direct line. His forefathers have all of them left journals and registers solely for the use of their posterity, none of them having published any thing; and he has recourse to these manuscripts on every difficult case, the veracity of which, at least, is unquestionable. His vivacity is prodigious, and he is indefatigable in his industry; but what most distinguishes him is a disinterestedness I never saw in any other: he is as regular in his attendance on the poorest peasant, from whom he never can receive one farthing, as on the richest of the nobility; and whenever he is wanted, will climb three or four miles on the moun-

tains, in the hottest sun, or heaviest rain, where a horse cannot go, to arrive at a cottage, where, if their condition requires it, he does not only give them advice and medicines gratis, but bread, wine, and whatever is needful. There never passes a week without one or more of these expeditions. His last visit is generally to me. I often see him as dirty and tired as a foot post, having eat nothing all day but a roll or two that he carries in his pocket, yet blest with such a perpetual flow of spirits, he is always gay to a degree above chearfulness. There is a peculiarity in this character that I hope will incline you to forgive my drawing it.

I have already described to you this extraordinary spot of land, which is almost unknown to the rest of the world, and indeed does not seem to be destined by nature to be inhabited by human creatures, and I believe would never have been so, without the cruel civil war between the

Guelps and Gibellines. Before that time here were only the huts of a few fishermen, who came at certain seasons on account of the fine fish with which this lake abounds, particularly trouts, as large and red as salmon. The lake itself is different from any other I ever saw or read of, being the colour of the sea, rather deeper tinged with green, which convinces me that the surrounding mountains are full of minerals, and it may be rich in mines yet undiscovered, as well as quarries of marble, from whence the churches and houses are ornamented, and even the streets paved, which, if polished and laid with art, would look like the finest mosaic work, being a variety of beautiful colours. I ought to retract the honourable title of street, none of them being broader than an alley, and impassable for any wheel carriage, except a wheel-barrow. This town, which is the largest of twenty-five that are built on the banks of the lake of Isco, is near two miles

long, and the figure of a semi-circle, and situated at the northern extremity. If it was a regular range of building, it would appear magnificent; but being founded accidentally by those who sought a refuge from the violences of those times, it is a mixture of shops and palaces, gardens and houses, which ascend a mile high, in a confusion which is not disagreeable. After this salutary water was found, and the purity of the air experienced, many people of quality chose it for their summer residence, and embellished it with several fine edifices. It was populous and flourishing, till that fatal plague, which overran all Europe in the year 1626. It made a terrible ravage in this place: the poor were almost destroyed, and the rich deserted it. Since that time it has never recovered its former splendour; few of the nobility returned; it is now only frequented during the water-drinking season. Several of the ancient palaces are degraded into lodging-

houses, and others stand empty in a ruinous condition: one of these I have bought. I see you lift up your eyes in wonder at my indiscretion. I beg you to hear my reasons before you condemn me. In my infirm state of health the unavoidable noise of a public lodging is very disagreeable; and here is no private one: secondly, and chiefly, the whole purchase is but one hundred pounds, with a very pretty garden in terraces down to the water, and a court behind the house. It is founded on a rock, and the walls so thick, they will probably remain as long as the earth. It is true the apartments are in most tattered circumstances, without doors or windows. The beauty of the great saloon gained my affection: it is forty-two feet in length by twenty-five, proportionably high, opening into a balcony of the same length, with a marble ballustre: the ceiling and flooring are in good repair, but I have been forced to the expense of covering the wall with

new stucco; and the carpenter is at this minute taking measure of the windows in order to make frames for sashes. The great stairs are in such a declining way, it would be a very hazardous exploit to mount them: I never intend to attempt it. The state bed-chamber shall also remain for the sole use of the spiders that have taken possession of it, along with the grand cabinet, and some other pieces of magnificence, quite useless to me, and which would cost a great deal to make habitable. I have fitted up six rooms, with lodgings for five servants, which are all I ever will have in this place; and I am persuaded that I could make a profit if I would part with my purchase, having been very much favoured in the sale, which was by auction, the owner having died without children, and I believe he had never seen this mansion in his life, it having stood empty from the death of his grandfather. The governor bid for me, and nobody

would bid against him. Thus I am become a citizen of Louvere, to the great joy of the inhabitants, not (as they would pretend) from their respect for my person, but I perceive they fancy I shall attract all the travelling English; and, to say truth, the singularity of the place is well worth their curiosity; but, as I have no correspondents, I may be buried here thirty years, and nobody know any thing of the matter.

I received the books you were so kind to send me, five days ago, but not the china, which I would not venture among the precipices that lead hither. I have only had time to read lord Orrery's work, which has extremely entertained, and not at all surprised me, having the honour of being acquainted with him, and know him for one of those danglers after wit, who, like those after beauty, spend their time in humbly admiring, and are happy in being permitted to attend, though they are

laughed at, and only encouraged to gratify the insatiate vanity of those professed wits and beauties, who aim at being publicly distinguished in those characters. Dean Swift, by his lordship's own account, was so intoxicated with the love of flattery, he sought it amongst the lowest of people, and the silliest of women, and was never so well pleased with any companions as those that worshipped him, while he insulted them. It is a wonderful condescension in a man of quality to offer his incense in such a crowd, and think it an honour to share a friendship with Sheridan,[1] &c. especially being himself endowed with such universal merit as he displays in these Letters, where he shews that he is a poet, a patriot, a philosopher, a physician, a critic, a complete scholar, and most excellent moralist; shining in private life

[1] Dr. Thomas Sheridan, the grandfather of R. Brinsley Sheridan, esq.

as a submissive son, a tender father, and zealous friend. His only error has been that love of learned ease which he has indulged in a solitude, which has prevented the world from being blest with such a general, minister, or admiral, being equal to any of these employments, if he would have turned his talents to the use of the public. Heaven be praised, he has now drawn his pen in its service, and given an example to mankind, that the most villainous actions, nay the most arrant nonsense, are only small blemishes in a great genius. I happen to think quite contrary, weak woman as I am. I have always avoided the conversation of those who endeavour to raise an opinion of their understanding, by ridiculing what both law and decency obliges them to revere; but whenever I have met with any of those bright spirits, who would be smart or sacred subjects, I have ever cut short their discourse by asking them if they had any

lights and revelations by which they would propose new articles of faith? Nobody can deny but religion is a comfort to the distressed, a cordial to the sick, and sometimes a restraint on the wicked; therefore, whoever would argue or laugh it out of the world, without giving some equivalent for it, ought to be treated as a common enemy: but, when this language comes from a churchman, who enjoys large benefices and dignities from that very church he openly despises, it is an object of horror for which I want a name, and can only be excused by madness, which I think the dean was always strongly touched with. His character seems to me a parallel with that of Caligula; and had he had the same power, would have made the same use of it. That emperor erected a temple to himself, where he was his own high-priest, preferred his horse to the highest honours in the state, professed enmity to the human race, and at last lost his life by a nasty

jest on one of his inferiors, which I dare swear Swift would have made in his place. There can be no worse picture made of the doctor's morals than he has given us himself in the letters printed by Pope. We see him vain, trifling, ungrateful to the memory of his patron, that of lord Oxford, making a servile court where he had any interested views, and meanly abusive when they were disappointed, and, as he says (in his own phrase) flying in the face of mankind, in company with his adorer Pope. It is pleasant to consider, that had it not been for the good nature of these very mortals they contemn, these two superior beings were entitled, by their birth and hereditary fortune, to be only a couple of link-boys. I am of opinion their friendship would have continued, though they had remained in the same kingdom: it had a very strong foundation—the love of flattery on one side, and the love of money on the

other. Pope courted with the utmost assiduity all the old men from whom he could hope a legacy, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Peterborough, Sir G. Kneller, Lord Bolingbroke, Mr. Wycherly, Mr. Congreve, Lord Harcourt, &c. and I do not doubt projected to sweep the dean's whole inheritance, if he could have persuaded him to throw up his deanery, and come to die in his house; and his general preaching against money was meant to induce people to throw it away, that he might pick it up. There cannot be a stronger proof of his being capable of any action for the sake of gain than publishing his literary correspondence, which lays open such a mixture of dulness and iniquity, that one would imagine it visible even to his most passionate admirers, if lord Orrery did not shew that smooth lines have as much influence over some people as the authority of the church in these countries, where it can not only excuse, but sanctify

any absurdity or villainy whatever. It is remarkable that his lordship's family have been smatterers in wit and learning for three generations: his grandfather has left monuments of his good taste in several rhiming tragedies, and the romance of Parthenissa. His father begun the world by giving his name to a treatise wrote by Atterbury and his club, which gained him great reputation; but (like sir Martin Marall, who would fumble with his lute when the music was over) he published soon after a sad comedy of his own, and, what was worse, a *dismal* tragedy he had found among the first earl of Orrery's papers. People could easier forgive his being partial to his own silly works, as a common frailty, than the want of judgment in producing a piece that dishonoured his father's memory.

Thus fell into dust a fame that had made a blaze by borrowed fire. To do justice to the present lord, I do not doubt

this fine performance is all his own, and is a public benefit, if every reader has been as well diverted with it as myself. I verily believe it has contributed to the establishment of my health.

I have wrote two long letters to your father, to which I have had no answer. I hope he is well. The prosperity of you and yours is the warmest wish of,

My dear child,

Your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

This letter is of a horrible length; I dare not read it over. I should have told you (to justify my folly as far as I can), here is no ground-rent to be paid, taxes for church and poor, or any imposition whatever, on houses. I desire in the next parcel you would send me Lady Frail, the Adventures of G. Edwards, and the Life

of Lord Stair, which I suppose very super-ficial, and partly fictitious; but as he was my acquaintance, I have some curiosity to see how he is represented.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Lovere, Aug. 20, 1758.

MY DEAR CHILD,

'TIS impossible to tell you to what degree I share with you in the misfortune that has happened. I do not doubt your own reason will suggest to you all the alleviations that can serve on so sad an occasion, and will not trouble you with the common place topics that are used, generally to no purpose, in letters of consolation. Disappointments ought to be less sensibly felt at my age than yours; yet I own I am so far affected by this, that I have need of all my philosophy to support it. However, let me beg of you not to indulge an useless grief, to the prejudice of your health, which is so necessary to your family. Every thing may turn out better than you expect. We see so darkly into futurity, we never know

when we have real cause to rejoice or lament. The worst appearances have often happy consequences, as the best lead many times into the greatest misfortunes. Human prudence is very straitly bounded. What is most in our power, though little so, is the disposition of our own minds. Do not give way to melancholy; seek amusements; be willing to be diverted, and insensibly you will become so. Weak people only place a merit in affliction. A grateful remembrance, and whatever honour we can pay to their memory, is all that is owing to the dead. Tears and sorrow are no duties to them, and make us incapable of those we owe to the living.

I give you thanks for your care of my books. I yet retain, and carefully cherish, my taste for reading. If relays of eyes were to be hired like post-horses, I would never admit any but silent companions: they afford a constant variety of entertainment, and is almost the only one pleasing

in the enjoyment, and inoffensive in the consequence. I am sorry your sight will not permit you a great use of it: the prattle of your little ones, and friendship of Lord Bute, will supply the place of it. My dear child, endeavour to raise your spirits, and believe this advice comes from the tenderness of your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Oct. 1, N. S. 1752.

I HAVE wrote five letters to my dear child, of which you have not acknowledged the receipt. I fear some, if not all of them, have miscarried, which may be attributed to Sir J. Gray's leaving Venice. You must now direct (at last), recommended à Mon^{r}. Smith, consul de S. M. B.

The first of those letters I mention spoke of lord K*** ; the second had a story of lady O*** ; the third answered yours relating to Miss Gunnings ; the fourth gave an account of our cardinal ; and the last enclosed a note upon Child. You need not excuse to me taking notice of your carpet. I think you have great reason to value yourself on the performance, but will have better luck than I have had, if you can persuade any body else to do so.

I could never get people to believe that I set a stitch, when I worked six hours in a day. You will confess my employments much more trifling than yours, when I own to you (between you and I), that my chief amusement is writing the history of my own time. It has been my fortune to have a more exact knowledge both of the persons and facts that have made the greatest figure in England in this age, than is common; and I take pleasure in putting together what I know, with an impartiality that is altogether unusual. Distance of time and place has totally blotted from my mind all traces either of resentment or prejudice; and I speak with the same indifference of the court of Great Britain as I should do of that of Augustus Cæsar. I hope you have not so ill opinion of me to think I am turning author in my old age. I can assure you I regularly burn every quire as soon as it is finished; and mean nothing more than to divert my solitary

hours. I know mankind too well to think they are capable of receiving truth, much less of applauding it: or, were it otherwise, applause to me is as insignificant as garlands on the dead. I have no concern beyond my own family. Pray write as often as you can to your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Brescia, Oct. 10, 1752.

THIS letter will be very dull or very peevish (perhaps both). I am at present much out of humour, being on the edge of a quarrel with my friend and patron, the cardinal Querini.[1] He is really a good-natured and generous man, and spends his vast revenue in (what he thinks) the service of his country, beside contributing largely to the building a new cathedral, which, when finished, will stand in the first rank of fine churches (where he has already the comfort of seeing his own busto, finely done both within and without). He has founded a magnificent college for one hundred

[1] Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini. He published the works of St. Ephrem Syrus, in six volumes, folio, 1732; and the Life of Pope Paul II. quarto, 1740. See De Bure Bibliographie Instructif, &c.

scholars, which I don't doubt he will endow very nobly, and greatly enlarged and embellished his episcopal palace. He has joined to it a public library, which, when I saw it, was a very beautiful room: it is now finished, furnished, and open twice in a week with proper attendance. Yesterday here arrived one of his chief chaplains, with a long compliment, which concluded with desiring I would send him my works; having dedicated one of his cases to English books, he intended my labours should appear in the most conspicuous place. I was struck dumb for some time with this astonishing request; when I recovered my vexatious surprize (foreseeing the consequence), I made answer, I was highly sensible of the honour designed me, but, upon my word, I had never printed a single line in my life. I was answered in a cold tone, that his Eminence could send for them to England, but they would be a long time coming, and with some hazard; and

that he had flattered himself I would not refuse him such a favour, and I need not be ashamed of seeing my name in a collection where he admitted none but the most eminent authors. It was to no purpose to endeavour to convince him. He would not stay dinner, though earnestly invited; and went away with the air of one that thought he had reason to be offended. I know his master will have the same sentiments, and I shall pass in his opinion for a monster of ingratitude, while it is the blackest of vices, in my opinion, and of which I am utterly incapable—I really could cry for vexation—

Sure nobody ever had such various provocations to print as myself. I have seen things I have wrote, so mangled and falsified, I have scarce known them. I have seen poems I never read, published with my name at length; and others, that were truly and singly wrote by me, printed under the names of others. I have made

myself easy under all these mortifications, by the reflection I did not deserve them; having never aimed at the vanity of popular applause; but I own my philosophy is not proof against losing a friend, and it may be making an enemy of one to whom I am obliged.

I confess I have often been complimented, since I have been in Italy, on the books I have given the public. I used at first to deny it with some warmth; but finding I persuaded nobody, I have of late contented myself with laughing whenever I heard it mentioned, knowing the character of a learned woman is far from being ridiculous in this country, the greatest families being proud of having produced female writers; and a Milanese lady, being now professor of mathematics in the university of Bologna, invited thither by a most obliging letter, wrote by the present Pope, who desired her to accept of the chair, not as a recompence for her merit, but to do honour to a

town which is under his protection. To say truth, there is no part of the world where our sex is treated with so much contempt as in England. I do not complain of men for having engrossed the government: in excluding us from all degrees of power, they preserve us from many fatigues, many dangers, and perhaps many crimes. The small proportion of authority that has fallen to my share (only over a few children and servants) has always been a burden, and never a pleasure, and I believe every one finds it so, who acts from a maxim (I think an indispensible duty), that whoever is under my power is under my protection. Those who find a joy in inflicting hardships, and seeing objects of misery, may have other sensations; but I have always thought corrections, even when necessary, as painful to the giver as to the sufferer, and am therefore very well satisfied with the state of subjection we are placed in: but I think it

the highest injustice, to be debarred the entertainment of my closet, and that the same studies, which raise the character of a man, should hurt that of a woman. We are educated in the grossest ignorance, and no art omitted to stifle our natural reason; if some few get above their nurses' instructions, our knowledge must rest concealed, and be as useless to the world as gold in the mine. I am now speaking according to our English notions, which may wear out, some ages hence, along with others equally absurd. It appears to me the strongest proof of a clear understanding in Longinus (in every light acknowledged one of the greatest men among the ancients), when I find him so far superior to vulgar prejudices, as to chuse his two examples of fine writing from a Jew (at that time the most despised people upon earth) and a woman. Our modern wits would be so far from quoting, they would scarce own they had read the works of such con-

temptible creatures, though perhaps they would condescend to steal from them, at the same time they declared they were below their notice: this subject is apt to run away with me; I will trouble you with no more of it.

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

DEAR CHILD,

Louvere, Oct. 20, N.S. 1752.

READ over Richardson—he sinks horribly in his third volume (he does so in his story of Clarissa). When he talks of Italy, it is plain he is no better acquainted with it than he is with the kingdom of Mancomingo. He might have made his Sir Charles's amour with Clementina begin in a convent, where the pensioners sometimes take great liberties; but that such familiarity should be permitted in her father's house, is as repugnant to custom, as it would be in London for a young lady of quality to dance on the ropes at Bartholomew fair: neither does his hero behave to her in a manner suitable to his nice notions. It was impossible a discerning man should not see her passion early enough to

to check it, if he had really designed it. His conduct puts me in mind of some ladies I have known, who could never find out a man to be in love with them, let him do or say what he would, till he made a direct attempt, and then they were so surprised I warrant you! nor do I approve Sir Charles's offered compromise (as he calls it). There must be a great indifference as to religion on both sides, to make so strict a union as marriage tolerable between people of such distinct persuasions. He seems to think women have no souls, by agreeing so easily that his daughters should be educated in bigotry and idolatry. You will perhaps think this last a hard word; yet it is not difficult to prove, that either the papists are guilty of idolatry, or the pagans never were so. You may see, in Lucian (in his vindication of his images), that they did not take their statues to be real gods, but only the representations of them. The same doctrine may be found

in Plutarch; and it is all the modern priests have to say in excuse for their worshipping wood and stone, though they cannot deny, at the same time, that the vulgar are apt to confound that distinction. I always, if possible, avoid controversial disputes: whenever I cannot do it, they are very short. I ask my adversary if he believes the Scripture; when that is answered affirmatively, their church may be proved by a child of ten years old, contradictory to it, in their most important points. My second question is, if they think St. Peter and St. Paul knew the true christian religion? The constant reply is, O yes. Then say I, purgatory, transubstantiation, invocation of Saints, adoration of the Virgin, relics (of which they might have had a cart load), and observation of Lent, is no part of it, since they neither taught nor practised any of these things. Vows of celibacy are not more contrary to nature, than to the positive precept of St. Paul.

He mentions a very common case, in which people are obliged, by conscience, to marry. No mortals can promise that case shall never be theirs, which depends on the disposition of the body as much as a fever; and 'tis as reasonable to engage never to feel the one as the other. He tells us, the marks of the Holy Spirit are charity, humility, truth, and long suffering. Can any thing be more uncharitable than damning eternally so many millions for not believing what they never heard? or prouder than calling their head a Vice-god? Pious frauds are avowedly permitted, and persecution applauded: these maxims cannot be dictated by the spirit of peace, which is so warmly preached in the gospel. The creeds of the apostles, and council of Nice, do not speak of the mass, or real presence, as articles of belief; and Athanasius asserts, whosoever believes according to them shall be saved. Jesus Christ, in answer to the lawyer, bids him love God

above all things, and his neighbour as himself, as all that is necessary to salvation. When he describes the last judgment, he does not examine what sect, or what church, men were of, but how far they had been beneficial to mankind. Faith cannot determine reward or punishment, being involuntary, and only the consequence of conviction: we do not believe what we please, but what appears to us with the face of truth. As I do not mistake exclamation, invective, or ridicule, for argument, I never recriminate on the lives of their popes and cardinals, when they urge the character of Henry the eighth; I only answer, good actions are often done by ill men through interested motives, and 'tis the common method of Providence to bring good out of evil: history, both sacred and profane, furnishes many examples of it. When they tell me I have forsook the worship of my ancestors, I say I have had more ancestors heathen than christian,

and my faith is certainly ancienter than theirs, since I have added nothing to the practice of the primitive professors of christianity. As to the prosperity or extent of the dominion of their church, which cardinal Bellarmin counts among the proofs of its orthodoxy, the Mahometans, who have larger empires, and have made a quicker progress, have a better plea for the visible protection of heaven. If the fopperies of their religion were only fopperies, they ought to be complied with, whenever it is established, like any ridiculous dress in fashion; but I think them impieties; their devotions are a scandal to humanity from their nonsense; the mercenary deceits, and barbarous tyranny of their ecclesiastics, inconsistent with moral honesty. If they object to the diversity of our sects as a mark of reprobation, I desire them to consider that objection has equal force against christianity in general. When they thunder with the names of

fathers and councils, they are surprised to find me as well (often better) acquainted with them, than themselves. I shew them the variety of their doctrines, their violent contests, and various factions, instead of that union they boast of. I have never been attacked a second time in any of the towns where I have resided, and perhaps shall never be so again after my last battle, which was with an old priest, a learned man, particularly esteemed as a mathematician, and who has a head and heart as warm as poor Whiston's. When I first came hither, he visited me every day, and talked of me every where with such violent praise, that, had we been young people, God knows what would have been said. I have always the advantage of being quite calm on a subject which they cannot talk of without heat. He desired I would put on paper what I had said. I immediately wrote one side of a sheet, leaving the other for his answer.

He carried it with him, promising to bring it the next day, since which time I have never seen it, though I have often demanded it, being ashamed of my defective Italian. I fancy he sent it to his friend the archbishop of Milan. I have given over asking for it, as a desperate debt. He still visits me, but seldom, and in a cold sort of a way. When I have found disputants I less respected, I have sometimes taken pleasure in raising their hopes by my concessions: they are charmed when I agree with them in the number of the sacraments; but are horridly disappointed when I explain myself by saying the word sacrament is not to be found either in Old or New Testament; and one must be very ignorant not to know it is taken from the listing oath of the Roman soldiers, and means nothing more than a solemn, irrevocable engagement. Parents vow, in infant baptism, to educate their children in the christian religion, which they take upon themselves

by confirmation; the Lord's supper is frequently renewing the same oath. Ordination and matrimony are solemn vows of a different kind: confession includes a vow of revealing all we know, and reforming what is amiss: extreme unction, the last vow, that we have lived in the faith we were baptised: in this sense they are all sacraments. As to the mysteries preached since, they were all invented long after, and some of them repugnant to the primitive institution. This digression has carried me far from my criticism. You will laugh at my making any, on a work below examination. It may be of use to my grand-daughters. I am persuaded he is a favourite author in all the nurseries in England, and has done much harm in the boarding schools, therefore ought to have his absurdities detected. You will think me angry with him for repeating a saying of mine, accompanied with a description of my person, which resembles me as much

as one of the giants in Guildhall, and plainly shews he never saw me in his life. Indeed, I think, after being so many years dead and buried, I might be suffered to enjoy the right of the departed, and rest in peace. I cannot guess how I can possibly have incurred his indignation, except he takes for truth the literary correspondence between me and the Mrs. Argens, whom I never saw, and who, with many high compliments, have attributed to me sentiments that never came into my head, and among them a criticism on Pamela, who is, however, more favourably treated than she deserves.

The book of letters I mention never came to my hands till some time after it was printed, accidentally at Thoulouse. I have need of all my philosophy on these occasions; though they happen so often, I ought to be accustomed to them. When I print, I submit to be answered, and criticised; but as I never did, 'tis hard to be

abused for other people's follies. A light thing said in gay company, should not be called upon for a serious defence, especially when it injures nobody. It is certain there are as many marriages as ever. Richardson is so eager for the multiplication of them, I suppose he is some parish curate, whose chief profit depends on weddings and christenings. He is not a man-midwife; for he would be better skilled in physic than to think fits and madness any ornament to the characters of his heroines: though this Sir Charles had no thoughts of marrying Clementina till she had lost her wits, and the divine Clarissa never acted prudently till she was in the same condition, and then very wisely desired to be carried to Bedlam, which is really all that is to be done in that case. Madness is as much a corporal distemper as the gout or asthma, never occasioned by affliction, or to be cured by the enjoyment of extravagant wishes. Passion may indeed bring on a

fit, but the disease is lodged in the blood, and it is not more ridiculous to attempt to relieve the gout by an embroidered slipper, than to restore reason by the gratification of wild desires.

Richardson is as ignorant in morality as he is in anatomy, when he declares abusing an obliging husband, or an indulgent parent, to be an innocent recreation. His Anna How and Charlotte Grandison are recommended as patterns of charming pleasantry, and applauded by his saint-like dames, who mistake folly for wit and humour, and impudence and ill nature for spirit and fire. Charlotte behaves like a humoursome child, and should have been used like one, and well whipped in the presence of her friendly confidante Harriot. Lord Halifax very justly tells his daughter, that a husband's kindness is to be received by a wife, even when he is drunk, and though it is wrapped up in never so much impertinence. Charlotte

acts with an ingratitude that I think too black for human nature, with such coarse jokes and low expressions as are only to be heard among the lowest class of people. Women of that rank often plead a right to beat their husbands, when they don't cuckold them; and I believe this author was never admitted into higher company, and should confine his pen to the amours of housemaids, and the conversation at the steward's table, where I imagine he has sometimes intruded, though oftener in the servants' hall: yet, if the title be not a puff, this work has passed three editions. I do not forgive him his disrespect of old china, which is below nobody's taste, since it has been the duke of Argyll's, whose understanding has never been doubted either by his friends or enemies.

Richardson never had probably money enough to purchase any, or even a ticket for a masquerade, which gives him such an aversion to them; though this intended

satire against them is very absurd on the account of his Harriet, since she might have been carried off in the same manner if she had been going from supper with her grandame. Her whole behaviour, which he designs to be exemplary, is equally blameable and ridiculous. She follows the maxim of Clarissa, of declaring all she thinks to all the people she sees, without reflecting that in this mortal state of imperfection, fig leaves are as necessary for our minds as our bodies, and 'tis as indecent to shew all we think, as all we have. He has no idea of the manners of high life: his old lord M. talks in the style of a country justice, and his virtuous young ladies romp like the wenches round a may-pole. Such liberties as pass between Mr. Lovelace and his cousins, are not to be excused by the relation. I should have been much astonished if lord Denbigh should have offered to kiss me; and I dare swear lord

Trentham never attempted such an impertinence to you.

With all my contempt I will take notice of one good thing: I mean his project of an English monastery. It was a favourite scheme of mine when I was fifteen; and had I then been mistress of an independent fortune, would certainly have executed it, and elected myself lady abbess. There would you and your ten children have been lost for ever. Yet such was the disposition of my early youth: so much was I unlike those girls that declare, if they had been born of the male kind they should have been great rakes, which is owning they have strong inclinations to ——— and drinking, and want only opportunity and impunity to exert them vigorously.

This tedious miscellany of a letter is promised to be delivered into your own hand; nay farther, that I shall have an account how you look, how you are dressed,

and in what manner your room is furnished. Nothing relating to you is indifferent to me; and if the performance answers the engagement, it will be a vast pleasure to your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Jan. 28, N. S. 1758.

DEAR CHILD,

You have given me a great deal of satisfaction by your account of your eldest daughter. I am particularly pleased to hear she is a good arithmetician; it is the best proof of understanding: the knowledge of numbers is one of the chief distinctions between us and brutes. If there is any thing in blood, you may reasonably expect your children should be endowed with an uncommon share of good sense. Mr. Wortley's family and mine have both produced some of the greatest men that have been born in England: I mean admiral Sandwich, and my grandfather, who was distinguished by the name of Wise William.[1] I have heard lord Bute's father mentioned

[1] William Pierrepont, second son of Robert earl of Kingston, died 1679, aged 71.

as an extraordinary genius, though he had not many opportunities of shewing it; and his uncle the present duke of Argyll has one of the best heads I ever knew. I will therefore speak to you as supposing lady ——— not only capable, but desirous of learning: in that case by all means let her be indulged in it. You will tell me I did not make it a part of your education: your prospect was very different from hers. As you had much in your circumstances to attract the highest offers, it seemed your business to learn how to live in the world, as it is hers, to know how to be easy out of it. It is the common error of builders and parents to follow some plan they think beautiful (and perhaps is so), without considering that nothing is beautiful which is displaced. Hence we see so many edifices raised that the raisers can never inhabit, being too large for their fortunes. Vistos are laid open

over barren heaths, and apartments contrived for a coolness very agreeable in Italy, but killing in the north of Britain: thus every woman endeavours to breed her daughter a fine lady, qualifying her for a station in which she will never appear, and at the same time incapacitating her for that retirement, to which she is destined. Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions, nor regret the loss of expensive diversions, or variety of company, if she can be amused with an author, in her closet. To render this amusement complete, she should be permitted to learn the languages. I have heard it lamented that boys lose so many years in meer learning of words: this is no objection to a girl, whose time is not so precious: she cannot advance herself in

any profession, and has therefore more hours to spare; and as you say her memory is good, she will be very agreeably employed this way. There are two cautions to be given on this subject: first, not to think herself learned, when she can read Latin, or even Greek. Languages are more properly to be called vehicles of learning than learning itself, as may be observed in many schoolmasters, who, though perhaps critics in grammar, are the most ignorant fellows upon earth. True knowledge consists in knowing things, not words. I would no farther wish her a linguist than to enable her to read books in their originals, that are often corrupted, and are always injured by translations. Two hours application every morning will bring this about much sooner than you can imagine, and she will have leisure enough beside, to run over the English poetry, which is a more important part of a woman's education than it is generally

supposed. Many a young damsel has been ruined by a fine copy of verses, which she would have laughed at if she had known it had been stolen from Mr. Waller. I remember, when I was a girl, I saved one of my companions from destruction, who communicated to me an epistle, she was quite charmed with. As she had naturally a good taste, she observed the lines were not so smooth as Prior's or Pope's, but had more thought and spirit than any of theirs. She was wonderfully delighted with such a demonstration of her lover's sense and passion, and not a little pleased with her own charms, that had force enough to inspire such elegancies. In the midst of this triumph I shewed her, that they were taken from Randolph's poems, and the unfortunate transcriber was dismissed with the scorn he deserved. To say truth, the poor plagiary was very unlucky to fall into my hands; that author being no longer in fashion, would have

escaped any one of less universal reading than myself. You should encourage your daughter to talk over with you what she reads; and as you are very capable of distinguishing, take care she does not mistake pert folly for wit and humour, or rhyme for poetry, which are the common errors of young people, and have a train of ill consequences. The second caution to be given her (and which is most absolutely necessary) is to conceal whatever learning she attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness: the parade of it can only serve to draw on her the envy, and consequently the most inveterate hatred, of all he and she fools, which will certainly be at least three parts in four of her acquaintance. The use of knowledge in our sex, beside the amusement of solitude, is to moderate the passions, and learn to be contented with a small expense, which are the certain effects of a studious life; and it may be preferable even to that

fame which men have engrossed to themselves, and will not suffer us to share. You will tell me I have not observed this rule myself; but you are mistaken: it is only inevitable accident that has given me any reputation that way. I have always carefully avoided it, and ever thought it a misfortune. The explanation of this paragraph would occasion a long digression, which I will not trouble you with, it being my present design only to say what I think useful for the instruction of my grand-daughter, which I have much at heart. If she has the same inclination (I should say passion) for learning that I was born with, history, geography, and philosophy will furnish her with materials to pass away cheerfully a longer life than is allotted to mortals. I believe there are few heads capable of making Sir Isaac Newton's calculations, but the result of them is not difficult to be understood by a moderate capacity. Do not fear this should make

her affect the character of lady ——, or lady ——, or Mrs. ——: those women h[illegible] ridiculous, not because they have learning, but because they have it not. One thinks herself a complete historian, after reading Echard's Roman History; another a profound philosopher, having got by heart some of Pope's *unintelligible* essays; and a third an able divine on the strength of Whitfield's sermons: thus you hear them screaming politics and controversy.

It is a saying of Thucydides, that ignorance is bold, and knowledge reserved. Indeed it is impossible to be far advanced in it, without being more humbled by a conviction of human ignorance, than elated by learning. At the same time I recommend books, I neither exclude work nor drawing. I think it as scandalous for a woman not to know how to use a needle, as for a man not to know how to use a sword. I was once extremely fond of my pencil, and it was a great mortification to

me when my father turned off my master, having made a considerable progress for the short time I learnt. My over eagerness in the pursuit of it had brought a weakness in my eyes, that made it necessary to leave off; and all the advantage I got was the improvement of my hand. I see, by hers, that practice will make her a ready writer: she may attain it by serving you for a secretary, when your health or affairs make it troublesome to you to write yourself; and custom will make it an agreeable amusement to her. She cannot have too many for that station of life which will probably be her fate. The ultimate end of your education was to make you a good wife (and I have the comfort to hear that you are one): hers ought to be, to make her happy in a virgin state. I will not say it is happier; but it is undoubtedly safer than any marriage. In a lottery, where there is (at the lowest computation) ten thousand blanks to a prize, it is the

most prudent choice, not to venture. I have always been so thoroughly persuaded of this truth, that, notwithstanding the flattering views I had for you (as I never intended you a sacrifice to my vanity), I thought I owed you the justice to lay before you all the hazards attending matrimony: you may recollect I did so in the strongest manner. Perhaps you may have more success in the instructing your daughter: she has so much company at home, she will not need seeking it abroad, and will more readily take the notions, you think fit to give her. As you were alone in my family, it would have been thought a great cruelty to suffer you no companions of your own age, especially having so many near relations, and I do not wonder their opinions influenced yours. I was not sorry to see you not determined on a single life, knowing it was not your father's intention, and contented myself with endea-

vouring to make your home so easy that you might not be in haste to leave it.

I am afraid you will think this a very long insignificant letter. I hope the kindness of the design will excuse it, being willing to give you every proof in my power that I am

Your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Feb. 19, N. S. 1753.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I GAVE you some general thoughts on the education of your children in my last letter; but fearing you should think I neglected your request, by answering it with too much conciseness, I am resolved to add to it what little I know on that subject, and which may perhaps be useful to you in a concern, with which you seem so nearly affected.

People commonly educate their children as they build their houses, according to some plan they think beautiful, without considering whether it is suited to the purposes for which they are designed. Almost all girls of quality are educated as if they were to be great ladies, which is often as little to be expected, as an immo-

derate heat of the sun in the north of Scotland. You should teach yours to confine their desires to probabilities, to be as useful as is possible to themselves, and to think privacy (as it is) the happiest state of life. I do not doubt your giving them all the instructions necessary to form them to a virtuous life; but 'tis a fatal mistake to do this, without proper restrictions. Vices are often hid under the name of virtues, and the practice of them followed by the worst of consequences. Sincerity, friendship, piety, disinterestedness, and generosity, are all great virtues; but pursued, without discretion, become criminal. I have seen ladies indulge their own ill humour by being very rude and impertinent, and think they deserved approbation, by saying I love to speak truth. One of your acquaintances made a ball the next day after her mother died, to shew she was sincere. I believe your own reflection will furnish you with but too many ex-

amples of the ill effects of the rest of the sentiments I have mentioned, when too warmly embraced. They are generally recommended to young people without limits or distinction, and this prejudice hurries them into great misfortunes, while they are applauding themselves in the noble practice (as they fancy) of very eminent virtues.

I cannot help adding (out of my real affection to you), that I wish you would moderate that fondness you have for your children. I do not mean you should abate any part of your care, or not do your duty to them in its utmost extent; but I would have you early prepare yourself for disappointments, which are heavy in proportion to their being surprising. It is hardly possible, in such a number, that none should be unhappy; prepare yourself against a misfortune of that kind. I confess there is hardly any more difficult to support; yet it is certain, imagination has a great

share in the pain of it, and it is more in our power (than it is commonly believed) to soften whatever ills are founded or augmented by fancy. Strictly speaking, there is but one real evil, I mean, acute pain; all other complaints are so considerably diminished by time, that it is plain the grief is owing to our passion, since the sensation of it vanishes when that is over.

There is another mistake, I forgot to mention, usual in mothers: if any of their daughters are beauties, they take great pains to persuade them that they are ugly, or at least that they think so, which the young woman never fails to believe springs from envy, and is perhaps not much in the wrong. I would, if possible, give them a just notion of their figure, and shew them how far it is valuable. Every advantage has its price, and may be either over or undervalued. It is the common doctrine of (what are called) good books, to inspire a contempt of beauty, riches, greatness,

&c. which has done as much mischief among the young of our sex as an over eager desire of them. Why they should not look on those things as blessings where they are bestowed, though not necessaries that it is impossible to be happy without, I cannot conceive. I am persuaded the ruin of lady —— was in great measure owing to the notions given her by the good people that had the care of her. 'Tis true, her circumstances and your daughters are very different: they should be taught to be content with privacy, and yet not neglect good fortune, if it should be offered them.

I am afraid I have tired you with my instructions. I do not give them as believing my age has furnished me with superior wisdom, but in compliance with your desire, and being fond of every opportunity that gives a proof of the tenderness with which I am ever

Your affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

I should be glad if you sent me the third volume of Campbell's Architecture, and with it any other entertaining books. I have seen the Dutchess of Marlborough's Memoirs, but should be glad of the apology for a late resignation. As to the ale, 'tis now so late in the year, it is impossible it should come good. You do not mention your father; my last letter from him told me he intended soon for England.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, March 6, 1753.

I CANNOT help writing a sort of apology for my last letter, foreseeing that you will think it wrong, or at least lord Bute will be extremely shocked, at the proposal of a learned education for daughters, which the generality of men believe to be as great a profanation, as the clergy would do, if the laity should presume to exercise the functions of the priesthood. I desire you would take notice, I would not have learning enjoined them as a task, but permitted as a pleasure, if their genius leads them naturally to it. I look upon my grand-daughters as a sort of lay nuns: destiny may have laid up other things for them, but they have no reason to expect to pass their time otherwise, than their aunts do at pre-

sent; and I know, by experience, it is in the power of study not only to make solitude tolerable, but agreeable. I have now lived almost seven years in a stricter retirement than yours in the isle of Bute, and can assure you, I have never had half an hour heavy on my hands, for want of something to do. Whoever will cultivate their own mind, will find full employment. Every virtue does not only require great care in the planting, but as much daily solicitude in cherishing, as exotic fruits and flowers. The vices and passions (which I am afraid are the natural product of the soil) demand perpetual weeding. Add to this the search after knowledge (every branch of which is entertaining), and the longest life is too short for the pursuit of it; which, though in some regard confined to very strait limits, leaves still a vast variety of amusements to those capable of tasting them, which is utterly impossible to be attained by those that are blinded by

prejudice, the certain effect of an ignorant education. My own was one of the worst in the world, being exactly the same as Clarissa Harlow's: her pious Mrs. Norton so perfectly resembling my governess, who had been nurse to my mother, I could almost fancy the author was acquainted with her, she took so much pains, from my infancy, to fill my head with superstitious tales and false notions. It was none of her fault, that I am not at this day afraid of witches and hobgoblins, or turned methodist. Almost all girls are bred after this manner. I believe you are the only woman (perhaps I might say, person) that never was either frighted or cheated into any thing by your parents. I can truly affirm, I never deceived any body in my life, excepting (which I confess has often happened undesigned) by speaking plainly, as Earl Stanhope used to say (during his ministry) he always imposed on the foreign ministers by telling them the naked

truth, which, as they thought *impossible* to come from the mouth of a statesman, they never failed to write information to their respective courts directly contrary to the assurances he gave them. Most people confound the ideas of sense and cunning, though there are really no two things in nature more opposite: it is, in part, from this false reasoning, the unjust custom prevails of debarring our sex from the advantages of learning, the men fancying the improvement of our understandings would only furnish us with more art to deceive them, which is directly contrary to the truth. Fools are always enterprizing, not seeing the difficulties of deceit, or the ill consequences of detection. I could give many examples of ladies whose ill conduct has been very notorious, which has been owing to that ignorance, which has exposed them to idleness, which is justly called the mother of mischief. There is nothing so like the education of a woman

of quality as that of a prince: they are taught to dance, and the exterior part of what is called good breeding, which, if they attain, they are extraordinary creatures in their kind, and have all the accomplishments required by their directors. The same characters are formed by the same lessons, which inclines me to think (if I dare say it) that nature has not placed us in an inferior rank to men, no more than the females of other animals, where we see no distinction of capacity; though, I am persuaded, if there was a commonwealth of rational horses (as doctor Swift has supposed), it would be an established maxim among them, that a mare could *not* be taught to pace. I could add a great deal on this subject, but I am not now endeavouring to remove the prejudices of mankind; my only design is, to point out to my grand-daughters the method of being contented with that retreat, to which unforeseen circumstances may oblige them,

and which is perhaps preferable to all the show of public life. It has always been my inclination. Lady Stafford (who knew me better than any body else in the world, both from her own just discernment, and my heart being ever as open to her as myself) used to tell me, my true vocation was a monastery; and I now find, by experience, more sincere pleasures with my books and garden, than all the flutter of a court could give me.

If you follow my advice, in relation to lady ——, my correspondence may be of use to her; and I shall very willingly give her those instructions that may be necessary in the pursuit of her studies. Before her age I was in the most regular commerce with my grandmother, though the difference of our time of life was much greater, she being past forty-five when she married my grandfather. She died at ninety-six, retaining, to the last, the vivacity and clearness of her understanding,

which was very uncommon. You cannot remember her, being then in your nurse's arms. I conclude with repeating to you, I only recommend, but am far from commanding, which I think I have no right to do. I tell you my sentiments, because you desired to know them, and hope you will receive them, with some partiality, as coming from

Your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, March 16, N.S. 1753.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of December 20th, this morning, which gave me great pleasure, by the account of your good health, and that of your father. I know nothing else could give me any at present, being sincerely afflicted for the death of the Doge.[1] He is lamented here by all ranks of people, as their common parent. He really answered the idea of lord Bolingbroke's imaginary patriotic prince, and was the only example I ever knew of having passed through the greatest employments, and most important negociations, without ever

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[1] Pietro Grimani died 1752. He was elected doge of Venice in 1741, and was succeeded by Francesco Loredano.

making an enemy. When I was at Venice, which was some months before his election, he was the leading voice in the senate, which would have been dangerous in the hands of a bad man: yet he had the art to silence envy; and I never once heard an objection to his character, or even an insinuation to his disadvantage. I attribute this peculiar happiness to be owing to the sincere benevolence of his heart, joined with an easy cheerfulness of temper, which made him agreeable to all companies, and a blessing to all his dependents. Authority appeared so humble in him, no one wished it less, except himself, who would sometimes lament the weight of it, as robbing him too much of the conversation of his friends, in which he placed his chief delight, being so little ambitious, that, to my certain knowledge, far from caballing to gain that elevation to which he was raised, he would have refused it, if he had not looked upon the acceptation of it as a duty

due to his country. This is only speaking of him in the public light. As to myself, he always professed, and gave me every demonstration of the most cordial friendship. Indeed, I received every good office from him I could have expected from a tender father, or a kind brother; and though I have not seen him since my last return to Italy, he never omitted an opportunity of expressing the greatest regard for me, both in his discourse to others, and upon all occasions, where he thought he could be useful to me. I do not doubt that I shall very sensibly miss the influence of his good intentions.

You will think I dwell too long on this melancholy subject. I will turn to one widely different, in taking notice of the dress of you London ladies, who I find take up the Italian fashion of going in the hair; it is here only the custom of the peasants, and the unmarried women of quality, excepting in the heat of summer,

when any cap would be almost insupportable. I have often smiled to myself in viewing our assemblies (which they call conversations) at Louvere, the gentlemen being all in light night-caps and night-gowns (under which I am informed they wear no breeches) and slippers, and the ladies in their stays and smock-sleeves, tied with ribbands, and a single lutestring petticoat: there is not a hat or a hoop to be seen. It is true this dress is called *vestimenti di confidenza*, and they do not appear in it in town, but in their own chambers, and that only during the summer months.

My paper admonishes me to conclude by assuring you, that I am ever your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, May 2, 1753.

I GIVE you thanks, dear child, for the entertaining account of your present diversions. I find the public calamities have no influence on the pleasures of the town. I remember very well the play of the Revenge, having been once acquainted with a party that intended to represent it, not one of whom is now alive. I wish you had told me who acted the principal parts. I suppose lord Bute was Alonzo, by the magnificence of his dress. I think they have mended their choice in the Orphan: I saw it played at Westminster-school, where lord Erskine was Monimia, and then one of the most beautiful figures that could be seen. I have had here (in low life) some amusements of the same sort. I

believe I wrote you word I intended to go to the opera at Brescia; but the weather being cold, and the roads bad, prevented my journey; and the people of this village (which is the largest I know, the curate tells me he has two thousand communicants) presented me a petition for leave to erect a theatre in my saloon. This house has stood empty many years before I took it, and they were accustomed to turn the stables into a play-house every carnival: it is now occupied by my horses, and they had no other place proper for a stage. I easily complied with their request, and was surprised at the beauty of their scenes, which, though painted by a country painter, are better coloured, and the perspective better managed, than in any of the second rate theatres in London. I liked it so well, it is not yet pulled down. The performance was yet more surprising, the actors being all peasants; but the Italians have so natural a genius for comedy, they

acted as well as if they had been brought up to nothing else, particularly the *arlequino*, who far surpassed any of our English, though only the taylor of the village, and I am assured never saw a play in any other place. It is pity they have not better poets, the pieces being not at all superior to our drolls. The music, habits, and illumination, were at the expense of the parish, and the whole entertainment, which lasted the three days of the carnival, cost me only a barrel of wine, which I gave the actors, and is not so dear as small beer in London. At present, as the old song says—

All my whole care,
Is my farming affair,
To make my corn grow, and my apple-trees
bear.

My improvements give me great pleasure, and so much profit, that if I could live a hundred years longer, I should certainly provide for all my grand-children: but

alas! as the Italians say, *feo sonato venti-quatro 'ora:* and it is not long I must expect to write myself your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, June 3, N. S. 1753.

MY DEAR CHILD,

You see I was not mistaken in supposing we should have disputes concerning your daughters, if we were together, since we can differ even at this distance. The sort of learning that I recommended is not so expensive, either of time or money, as dancing, and in my opinion likely to be of much more use to lady ——, if her memory and apprehension are what you represented them to me. However, every every one has a right to educate their children after their own way, and I shall speak no more on that subject. I was so much pleased with the character you gave her, that had there been any possibility of her undertaking so long a journey, I should

certainly have asked for her; and I think out of such a number you might have spared her. I own my affection prevailed over my judgment in this thought, since nothing can be more imprudent than undertaking the management of another's child. I verily believe that had I carried six daughters out of England with me, I could have disposed of them all advantageously. The winter I passed at Rome there was an unusual concourse of English, many of them with great estates, and their own masters: as they had no admittance to the Roman ladies, nor understood the language, they had no way of passing their evenings but in my apartment, where I had always a full drawing-room. Their governors encouraged their assiduities as much as they could, finding I gave them lessons of economy and good conduct; and my authority was so great, it was a common threat amongst them, I'll tell Lady Mary what you say. I was judge of all

their disputes, and my decisions always submitted to. While I staid, there was neither gaming, drinking, quarrelling, or keeping. The Abbé Grant (a very honest good natured North Briton, who has resided several years at Rome) was so much amazed at this uncommon regularity, he would have made me believe I was bound in conscience to pass my life there, for the good of my countrymen. I can assure you my vanity was not at all raised by this influence over them, knowing very well that had lady Charlotte de Roussi been in my place, it would have been the same thing. There is that general emulation in mankind, I am fully persuaded if a dozen young fellows bred a bear amongst them, and saw no other creature, they would every day fall out for the bear's favours, and be extremely flattered by any mark of distinction shewn by that ugly animal. Since my last return to Italy, which is now near seven years, I have lived

in a solitude not unlike that of Robinson Crusoe, excepting my short trips to Louvere: my whole time is spent in my closet and garden, without regretting any conversation but that of my own family. The study of simples is a new amusement to me. I have no correspondence with any body at London but yourself and your father, whom I have not heard from a long time. My best wishes attend you and yours, being with great truth your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, June 10, N. S. 1753.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of May the 12th but yesterday, July the 9th. I am surprised you complain of my silence. I have never failed answering yours the post after I received them; but I fear, being directed to Twickenham (having no other direction from you), your servants there may have neglected them. I have been these six weeks, and still am, at my dairy-house, which joins to my garden. I believe I have already told you it is a long mile from the castle, which is situate in the midst of a very large village, once a considerable town, part of the walls still remaining, and has not vacant ground enough about it to make a garden, which

is my greatest amusement, it being now troublesome to walk, or even go in the chaise till the evening. I have fitted up in this farm-house a room for myself, that is to say, strewed the floor with rushes, covered the chimney with moss and branches, and adorned the room with basons of earthen ware (which is made here to great perfection) filled with flowers, and put in some straw chairs, and a couch bed, which is my whole furniture. This spot of ground is so beautiful, I am afraid you will scarce credit the description, which, however, I can assure you, shall be very literal, without any embellishment from imagination. It is on a bank, forming a kind of peninsula, raised from the river Oglio fifty feet, to which you may descend by easy stairs cut in the turf, and either take the air on the river, which is as large as the Thames at Richmond, or by walking an avenue two hundred yards on the side of it, you find a wood of a

hundred acres, which was all ready cut into walks and ridings when I took it. I have only added fifteen bowers in different views, with seats of turf. They were easily made, here being a large quantity of underwood, and a great number of wild vines, which twist to the top of the highest trees, and from which they make a very good sort of wine they call brusco. I am now writing to you in one of these arbours, which is so thick shaded, the sun is not troublesome, even at noon. Another is on the side of the river, where I have made a camp kitchen, that I may take the fish, dress, and eat it immediately, and at the same time see the barks, which ascend or descend every day to or from Mantua, Guastalla, or Pont de Vie, all considerable towns. This little wood is carpetted, in their succeeding seasons, with violets and strawberries, inhabited by a nation of nightingales, and filled with game of all kinds, excepting deer and wild

boar, the first being unknown here, and not being large enough for the other.

My garden was a plain vineyard when it came into my hands not two years ago, and it is, with a small expence, turned into a garden that (apart from the advantage of the climate) I like better than that of Kensington. The Italian vineyards are not planted like those in France, but in clumps, fastened to trees planted in equal ranks (commonly fruit trees), and continued in festoons from one to another, which I have turned into covered galleries of shade, that I can walk in the heat without being incommoded by it. I have made a dining room of verdure capable of holding a table of twenty covers; the whole ground is three hundred and seventeen feet in length, and two hundred in breadth. You see it is far from large; but so prettily disposed (though I say it), that I never saw a more agreeable rustic garden, abounding with all sorts of fruit, and producing a variety of

wines. I would send you a pipe, if I did not fear the customs would make you pay too dear for it. I believe my description gives you but an imperfect idea of my garden. Perhaps I shall succeed better in describing my manner of life, which is as regular as that of any monastery. I generally rise at six, and as soon as I have breakfasted, put myself at the head of my needle-women and work with them till nine. I then inspect my dairy, and take a turn among my poultry, which is a very large enquiry. I have, at present, two hundred chickens, besides turkies, geese, ducks, and peacocks. All things have hitherto prospered under my care; my bees and silk-worms are doubled, and I am told that, without accidents, my capital will be so in two years time. At eleven o'clock I retire to my books, I dare not indulge myself in that pleasure above an hour. At twelve I constantly dine, and sleep after dinner till about three. I then

send for some of my old priests, and either play at piquet or whist, till 'tis cool enough to go out. One evening I walk in my wood, where I often sup, take the air on horseback the next, and go on the water the third. The fishery of this part of the river belongs to me; and my fisherman's little boat (to which I have a green lute-string awning) serves me for a barge. He and his son are my rowers without any expence, he being very well paid by the profit of the fish, which I give him on condition of having every day one dish for my table. Here is plenty of every sort of fresh water fish (excepting salmon); but we have a large trout so like it, that I who have almost forgot the taste, do not distinguish it.

We are both placed properly in regard to our different times of life: you amidst the fair, the gallant, and the gay; I, in a retreat, where I enjoy every amusement that solitude can afford. I confess I some-

times wish for a little conversation ; but I reflect that the commerce of the world, gives more uneasiness than pleasure, and quiet, is all the hope that can reasonably be indulged at my age. My letter is of an unconscionable length ; I should ask your pardon for it, but I had a mind to give you an idea of my mode of passing my time, take it as an instance of the affection of, dear child,

Your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, July 23, N. S. 1753.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE just received two letters from you, though the dates are a month distant. The death of lady ——— naturally raises the mortifying reflection, on how slender a thread hangs all worldly prosperity! I cannot say I am otherwise much touched at it. It is true she was my sister, as it were, and in some sense; but her behaviour to me never gave me any love, nor her general conduct any esteem. I own I cannot forgive her dishonouring her family by her marriage; it may be you will call this an old fashioned way of thinking. The confounding of all ranks, and making a jest of order, has long been growing in England; and I perceive by the books you sent me, has made a very considerable pro-

gress. The heros and heroines of the age are coblers and kitchen wenches. Perhaps you will say, I should not take my ideas of the manners of the times from such trifling authors; but it is more truly to be found among them, than from any historian: as they write merely to get money, they always fall into the notions that are most acceptable to the present taste. It has long been the endeavour of our English writers, to represent people of quality as the vilest and silliest part of the nation, being (generally) very low born themselves. I am not surprised at their propagating this doctrine; but I am much mistaken if this levelling principle does not, one day or other, break out in fatal consequences to the public, as it has already done in many private families. You will think I am influenced by living under an aristrocratic government, where distinction of rank is carried to a very great height; but I can assure you, my opinion

is founded on reflection and experience, and I wish to God I had always thought in the same manner, though I had ever the utmost contempt for mis-alliances; yet the silly prejudices of my education had taught me to believe that I was to treat nobody as an inferior, and that poverty was a degree of merit: this imaginary humility has made me admit many familiar acquaintance, of which I have heartily repented every one, and the greatest examples I have known of honour and integrity have been among those of the highest birth and fortunes. There are many reasons why it should be so, which I will not trouble you with. If my letter was to be published, I know I should be be railed at for pride, and called an enemy of the poor; but I take a pleasure in telling you my real thoughts. I would willingly establish the most intimate friendship between us, and I am sure no proof of it shall ever be want-

ing on my side. I am sorry for the untimely death of poor lord C***ry; he had certainly a very good heart: I have often thought it great pity it was not under the direction of a better head. I had lost his favour some time before I left England on a pleasant account. He came to me one morning with a hat full of paper, which he desired me to peruse, and tell him my sincere opinion: I trembled at the proposition, foreseeing the inevitable consequence of this confidence. However, I was not so barbarous as to tell him that his verses were extremely stupid (as God knows they were), and that he was no more inspired with the spirit of poetry, than that of prophecy. I contented myself with representing to him, in the mildest terms, that it was not the business of a man of quality to turn author, and that he should confine himself to the applause of his friends, and by no means venture on the press. He

seemed to take this advice with good humour, promised to follow it, and we parted without any dispute; but alas! he could not help showing his performance to better judges, who, with their usual candour and good nature, earnestly exhorted him to oblige the world with this instructive piece, which was soon after published, and had the success I expected from it. Pope persuaded him, poor soul! that my declaiming against it occasioned the ill reception it met with, though this is the first time I ever mentioned it in my life, and I did not so much as guess the reason. I heard of him no more, till a few days before I left London. I accidentally said to one of his acquaintance, that his visits to me were at an end, I knew not why; and I was let into this weighty secret. My journey prevented all explanation between us, and perhaps I should not have thought it worth any, if I had staid. I am not surprised he has

left nothing to the duchess of Q****y, knowing he had no value for her, though I never heard him name her: but he was of that species of mankind, who, without designing it discover all they think to any observer that converses with them. His desire of fixing his name to a certain quantity of wall, is one instance, among thousands, of the passion men have for perpetuating their memory: this weakness (I call every sentiment so that cannot be defended by reason) is so universal, it may be looked on as instinct; and as no instinct is implanted but to some purpose, I could almost incline to an opinion, which was professed by several of the fathers, and adopted by some of the best French divines, that the punishment of the next life consists not only in the continuance, but the redoubling our attachment for this, in a more intense manner than we can now have any notion of. These re-

flections would carry me very far: for your comfort my paper is at an end, and I have scarce room to tell you a truth which admits of no doubt, that I am

Your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Brescia, July 22, N. S. 1753.

When I wrote to you last, my dear child, I told you I had a great cold, which ended in a very bad fever, that continued a fortnight without intermission, and you may imagine has brought me very low. I have not yet left my chamber. My first care is to thank you for yours of May 8.

I have not yet lost all my interest in this country by the death of the Doge, having another very considerable friend, though I cannot expect to keep him long, he being near fourscore. I mean the cardinal Querini, who is archbishop of this diocese, and consequently of great power, there being not one family, high or low, in this province, that has not some ecclesiastic in it, and therefore all of them have some dependence on him. He is of one of the

first families of Venice, vastly rich of himself, and has many great benefices beside his archbishoprick; but these advantages are little in his eyes, in comparison of being the first author (as he fancies) at this day in Christendom; and indeed, if the merit of books consisted in bulk and number, he might very justly claim that character. I believe he has published, yearly, several volumes for above fifty years, beside corresponding with all the literati of Europe, and, among these, several of the senior fellows at Oxford, and some members of the royal society, that neither you nor I have ever heard of, whom he is persuaded are the most eminent men in England. He is at present employed in writing his own life, of which he has already printed the first tome; and, if he goes on in the same style, it will be a most voluminous performance. He begins from the moment of his birth, and tells us that, on that day, he made such extraordinary faces, the mid-

wife, chambermaids, and nurses all agreed, that there was born a shining light in church and state. You'll think me very merry with the failings of my friend. I confess I ought to forgive a vanity to which I am obliged for many good offices, since I do not doubt it is owing to that, that he professes himself so highly attached to my service, having an opinion that my suffrage is of great weight in the learned world, and that I ſhall not fail to spread his fame, at least, all over Great Britain. He sent me a present last week of a very uncommon kind, even his own picture, extremely well done, but so flattering, that it is a young old man, with a most pompous inscription under it. I suppose he intended it for the ornament of my library, not knowing it is only a closet: however, these distinctions he shews me, gives me a figure in this town, where every body has something to hope from him; and it was certainly in a view to that they would have

complimented me with a statue, for I would not have you mistake so far as to imagine there is any set of people more grateful or generous than another. Mankind is every where the same: like cherries or apples, they may differ in size, shape, or colour, from different soils, climates, or culture, but are still essentially the same species; and the little black wood cherry is not nearer akin to the may-dukes that are served at great tables, than the wild, naked negro, to the fine figures adorned with coronets and ribbands. This observation might be carried yet farther: all animals are stimulated by the same passions, and act very nearly alike, as far as we are capable of observing them.

The conclusion of your letter has touched me very much. I sympathise with you, my dear child, in all the concern you express for your family: you may remember I represented it to you, before you were married; but that is one of the sentiments

it is impossible to comprehend till it is felt. A mother only knows a mother's fondness. Indeed the pain so overbalances the pleasure, that I believe, if it could be thoroughly understood, there would be no mothers at all. However, take care that the anxiety for the future does not take from you the comforts you may enjoy in the present hour: it is all that is properly ours; and yet such is the weakness of humanity, we commonly lose what is, either by regretting the past, or disturbing our minds with fear of what may be. You have many blessings; a husband you love, and who behaves well to you, agreeable hopeful children, a handsome convenient house, with pleasant gardens, in a good air and fine situation, which I place among the most solid satisfactions of life. The truest wisdom is that which diminishes to us what is displeasing, and turns our thoughts to the advantages which we possess. I can assure you I give no precepts I do not

daily practise. How often do I fancy to myself the pleasure I should take in seeing you in the midst of the little people; and how severe do I then think my destiny, that denies me that happiness! I endeavour to comfort myself by reflecting, that we should certainly have perpetual disputes (if not quarrels) concerning the management of them; the affection of a grandmother has generally a tincture of dotage: you would say I spoilt them, and perhaps not be much in the wrong. Speaking of them calls to my remembrance the token I have so long promised my god-daughter: I am really ashamed of it: I would have sent it by Mr. Anderson, if he had been going immediately to London; but as he proposed a long tour, I durst not press it upon him. It is not easy to find any one who will take the charge of a jewel for a long journey; it may be, the value of it in money to chuse something for herself, would be as acceptable: if so, I will send you a note

upon Child. Ceremony should be banished between us. I beg you would speak freely upon that, and all other occasions, to your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Dairy-house, July 26, N. S. 1753.

I AM really as fond of my garden as a young author of his first play, when it has been well received by the town, and can no more forbear teasing my acquaintance for their approbation: though I gave you a long account of it lately, I must tell you, that I have made two little terrasses, raised twelve steps each, at the end of my great walk; they are just finished, and a great addition to the beauty of my garden. I enclose you a rough draught of it, drawn (or more properly scrawled) by my own hand, without the assistance of rule or compasses, as you will easily perceive. I have mixed in my espaliers as many rose and jessamin trees as I can cram in; and in the squares designed for the use of the kitchen, have

avoided putting any thing disagreeable either to sight or smell, having another garden below for cabbage, onions, garlick. All the walks are garnished with beds of flowers, beside the parterres, which are for a more distinguished sort. I have neither brick nor stone walls: all my fence is a high hedge, mingled with trees; but fruit is so plenty in this country, nobody thinks it worth stealing. Gardening is certainly the next amusement to reading; and as my sight will now permit me little of that, I am glad to form a taste that can give me so much employment, and be the plaything of my age, now my pen and needle are almost useless to me.

I am very glad you are admitted into the conversation of the prince and princess: it is a favour that you ought to cultivate for the good of the family, which is now numerous, and it may one day be of great advantage. I think lord Bute much in the right to endeavour the continuance of

it; and it would be imprudent in you to neglect what may be of great use to your children. I pray God bless both you and them: it is the daily prayer of your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY M.

Now the sea is open, we may send packets to one another. I wish you would send me [1] Campbell's book of prints of the English houses, and that lord Bute would be so good to chuse me the best book of practical gardening extant.

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[1] Vitruvius Britannicus.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, Oct. 10, N. S 1753.

I THINK I now know why our correspondence is so miserably interrupted, and so many of my letters lost to and from England; but I am no happier in the discovery than a man that has found out his complaints proceed from a stone in the kidneys: I know the cause, but am entirely ignorant of the remedy, and must suffer my uneasiness with what patience I can.

An old priest made me a visit as I was folding my last packet to my daughter. Observing it to be large, he told me I had done a great deal of business that morning. I made answer, I had done no business at all; I had only wrote to my daughter on family affairs, or such trifles as make up women's conversation. He said gravely, people like your Excellenza, do not use to

write long letters upon trifles. I assured him, that if he understood English, I would let him read my letters. He replied, with a mysterious smile, if I did understand English, I should not understand what you have written, except you would give me the key, which I durst not presume to ask. What key? (said I, staring) there is not one cypher beside the date. He answered, cyphers were only used by novices in politics, and it was very easy to write intelligibly, under feigned names of persons and places, to a correspondent, in such a manner as should be almost impossible to be understood by any body else.

Thus I suppose my innocent epistles are severely scrutinized: and when I talk of my grand-children, they are fancied to represent all the potentates of Europe. This is very provoking. I confess there are good reasons for extraordinary caution at this juncture; but 'tis very hard I cannot pass for being as insignificant as I really am.

The house at Acton was certainly left to lady Carolina;[1] and whatever lady Anne left, is so little (when divided into five parts), it is not worth inquiring for, especially after so long silence. I heartily congratulate you on the recovery of your sight. It is a blessing I prefer to life, and will seek for glasses whenever I am in a place where they are sold.

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[1] The daughters of Evelyn duke of Kingston, by lady Isabella Bentinck, his second wife. Lady Carolina Pierrepont married Thomas Brand, esq. and died June 9, 1753. Lady Anne died in 1739, unmarried.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Nov. 27, N. S. 1753.

DEAR CHILD,

By the account you give me of London, I think it very much reformed; at least you have one sin the less, and it was a very reigning one in my time, I mean scandal: it must be literally reduced to a whisper, since the custom of living all together. I hope it has also banished the fashion of talking all at once, which was very prevailing when I was in town, and may perhaps contribute to brotherly love and unity, which was so much declined in my memory, that it was hard to invite six people that would not, by cold looks, or piquing reflections, affront one another. I suppose parties are at an end, though I fear it is the consequence of the old almanack prophecy,

"Poverty brings peace;" and I fancy you really follow the French mode, and the lady keeps an assembly, that the assembly may keep the lady, and card money pay for clothes and equipage, as well as cards and candles. I find I should be as solitary in London as I am here in the country, it being impossible for me to submit to live in a *drum*, which I think so far from a cure of uneasinesses, that it is, in my opinion, adding one more to the heap. There are so many attached to humanity, 'tis impossible to fly from them all; but experience has confirmed to me (what I always thought), that the pursuit of pleasure will be ever attended with pain, and the study of ease be most certainly accompanied with pleasures. I have had this morning as much delight in a walk in the sun as ever I felt formerly in the crouded mall, even when I imagined I had my share of the admiration of the place, which was generally

soured before I slept by the informations of my female friends, who seldom failed to tell me, it was observed that I had shewed an inch above my shoe-heels, or some other criticism of equal weight, which was construed affectation, and utterly destroyed all the satisfaction *my* vanity had given me. I have now no other but in my little housewifery, which is easily gratified in this country, where, by the help of my receipt book, I make a very shining figure among my neighbours, by the introduction of custards, cheesecakes, and minced pies, which were entirely unknown to these parts, and are received with universal applause, and I have reason to believe will preserve my memory even to future ages, particularly by the art of butter-making, in which I have so improved them, that they now make as good as in any part of England.

My paper is at an end, which I do not

doubt you are glad of. I have hardly room for my compliments to lord Bute, blessing to my grand-children, and to assure you that I am ever your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Dec. 13, 1753

DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE wrote you so many letters without any return, that if I loved you at all less than I do, I should certainly give over writing. I received a kind letter last post from lady Oxford, which gives me hopes I shall at length receive yours, being persuaded you have not neglected our correspondence, though I am not so happy to have the pleasure of it.

I have little to say from this solitude, having already sent you a description of my garden, which, with my books, takes up all my time. I made a small excursion last week to visit a nunnery, twelve miles from hence, which is the only institution of the kind in all Italy. It is in a town in the state of Mantua, founded by a princess

of the house of Gonzaga, one of whom (now very old) is the present abbess: they are dressed in black, and wear a thin cypress veil at the back of their heads, excepting which, they have no mark of a religious habit, being set out in their hair, and having no guimpe, but wearing *des collets montez*, for which I have no name in English, but you may have seen them in very old pictures, being in fashion both before and after ruffs. Their house is a very large handsome building, though not regular, every sister having liberty to build her own apartment to her taste, which consists of as many rooms as she pleases: they have each a separate kitchen, and keep cooks and what other servants they think proper, though there is a very fine public refectory: they are permitted to dine in private whenever they please. Their garden is very large, and the most adorned of any in these parts. They have no grates, and make what visits they will,

always two together, and receive those of the men as well as ladies. I was accompanied when I went with all the nobility of the town, and they shewed me all the house, without excluding the gentlemen; but what I think the most remarkable privilege is a country house, which belongs to them, three miles from the town, where they pass every vintage, and at any time any four of them may take their pleasure there, for as many days as they choose. They seem to differ from the *chanoinesse* of Flanders only in their vow of celibacy. They take pensioners, but only those of quality. I saw here a niece of general Brown. Those that profess, are obliged to prove a descent as noble as the knights of Malta. Upon the whole, I think it the most agreeable community I have seen, and their behaviour more decent than that of the cloistered nuns, who I have heard say themselves, that the grate permits all liberty of speech, since it leaves

them no other, and indeed they generally talk as if they thought so. I went to a monastery, which gave me occasion to know a great deal of their conduct, which (though the convent of the best reputation in that town, where it is) was such, as I would as soon put a girl into the play-house for education, as send her among them.

My paper is at an end, and hardly leaves room for my compliments to lord Bute, blessing to my grand-children, and assurance to yourself of being your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, April 28, 1754

DEAR CHILD,

I AM quite sick with vexation at the interruption of our correspondence. I have sent six letters since the date of the last, which you say you have received; and three addressed to my sister, lady Mar, none of which you say are arrived. You have had no loss further than in testimonies of my real affection; my long stories of what happens here can be but of little entertainment to you; but every thing from England is interesting to me, who live the life, as I have already told you, of Robinson Crusoe, whose goats and kids were as much his companions as any of the people I see here. My time is wholly dedicated to the care of a decaying body, and

endeavouring, as the old song says, "to grow wiser and better as my strength wears away." I imagine the duke of Newcastle[1] will soon have the treasurer's staff; the title of first commissioner is not equal to his importance. You do not tell me how Mr. Pelham[2] has disposed of his affairs, and you should be particular in your relations. I am as ignorant of every thing that passes in London, as if I inhabited the deserts of Africa. My health is so often disordered, that I begin to be as weary of mending it as mending old lace, which, when it is patched in one place, breaks out in another. I am very glad of Lord Mountstuart's[3] recovery, and pity very much the pain you have suffered during his danger. It would

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[1] Appointed first lord of the treasury in March 1754.

[2] Henry Pelham, esq. died March 6, 1754. He had been appointed first lord of the treasury in November, 1743. He succeeded Samuel lord Sandys.

[3] The present marquis of Bute.

have been terrible to have lost so agreeable a child. I dare not advise you to moderate your tenderness, finding it impossible to overcome my own, notwithstanding my melancholy experience. This letter is incomparably dull. I cannot resolve to own it by setting my name to it.

My compliments to lord B. God bless you and yours.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, May 7, N. S. 1754.

DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE already wished you joy of your new daughter, and wrote to Lord Bute to thank him for his letter. I don't know whether I shall make my court to you in saying it, but I own I cannot help thinking that your family is numerous enough, and that the education and disposal of four girls is employment for a whole life. I remain in a retirement, where my amusements are confined to my garden and dairy: however, I should be glad to know, now and then, what is doing among my acquaintance at London, and beg you would enquire of the price raw silk bears. I have asked this question very often, but suppose my letters miscarried, having never

had any answer. Your father has been so obliging to promise me some ale; if you would send, at the same time, Colin Campbell's books of architecture, consigned to signior Isaac M. de Treves, they would come safe to me. I imagine the duke of Kingston is now building. I was told he intended it on the same ground where the last house stood, which I think an ill fancy, being the lowest part of the park, and he might chuse others with a prospect more agreeable, which is, in my opinion, the first thing to be considered in a country seat. I have given you a large description of that of my dairy house, which is the most beautiful of any in this province; if I knew it was lost I would repeat it.

This letter is so dull I am ashamed to set my name to it.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, May 27, N. S. 1754.

DEAR CHILD,

I HAD the pleasure of your letter two days ago, in which you tell me of the marriage of Mr. Mackenzie,[1] which I was extremely glad to hear, wishing him happiness, who I think so well deserves it, from an uncommon share of honour and good nature, of which even his indiscretions are proofs. The duchess of Argyle has acted, in my opinion, with equal generosity and prudence: her ill success, in the disposal of lady ——, has shewn her the mistake of interested matches, which are generally unfortunate. This spring has been very

[1] James Stuart Mackenzie, only brother of John earl of Bute, married lady Betty Campbell, second daughter of John duke of Argyll. He died in 1798.

melancholy to me, having been tormented with a quotidian ague, of which I am scarcely recovered; and my woman, who is the most necessary servant in my family, still afflicted with a tertian, which puts my whole house in disorder, and hinders my removal to my dairy, to my great mortification, now the heats are begun. If my garden and my house stood together, I would not change this seat for lord Tilney's or the marquis of Rockingham's; but alas! they are some miles asunder.

Your new fashioned game of brag was the genteel amusement when I was a girl; crimp succeeded to that, and basset and hazard employed the town, when I left it to go to Constantinople. At my return I found them all at commerce, which gave place to quadrille, and that to whist; but the rage of play has been ever the same, and will ever be so among the idle of both sexes. It is the same in every great town, and I think more particularly all over

France. Here is a young man of quality, one mile from hence, just of age, who lost last carnival, at Brescia, ten thousand pounds, being all the money his guardians had laid up in his minority; and, as his estate is entailed, he cannot raise one farthing on it, and is now a sort of prisoner in his castle, where he lives upon rapine, I mean running in debt to poor people, who perhaps he will never be able to pay. I am afraid you are tired with this insignificant letter; we old women love tattling; you must forgive the infirmities of your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, June 23, 1754.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE promised you some remarks on all the books I have received. I believe you would easily forgive my not keeping my word; however, I shall go on. The Rambler is certainly a strong misnomer; he always plods in the beaten road of his predecessors, following the Spectator (with the same pace a pack horse would do a hunter) in the style that is proper to lengthen a paper. These writers may, perhaps, be of service to the public, which is saying a great deal in their favour. There are numbers of both sexes who never read anything but such productions, and cannot spare time, from doing nothing, to go through a sixpenny pamphlet. Such gentle readers may be improved by a moral hint,

which, though repeated over and over, from generation to generation, they never heard in their lives. I should be glad to know the name of this laborious author. H. Fielding has given a true picture of himself and his first wife, in the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Booth, some compliments to his own figure excepted; and, I am persuaded, several of the incidents he mentions are real matters of fact. I wonder he does not perceive Tom Jones and Mr. Booth are sorry scoundrels. All this sort of books have the same fault, which I cannot easily pardon, being very mischievous. They place a merit in extravagant passions, and encourage young people to hope for impossible events, to draw them out of the misery they choose to plunge themselves into, expecting legacies from unknown relations, and generous benefactors to distressed virtue, as much out of nature as fairy treasures. Fielding has really a fund of true humour, and was to be pitied at

his first entrance into the world, having no choice, as he said himself, but to be a hackney writer, or a hackney coachman. His genius deserved a better fate; but I cannot help blaming that continued indiscretion, to give it the softest name, that has run through his life, and I am afraid still remains. I guessed R. Random to be his, though without his name. I cannot think Ferdinand Fathom wrote by the same hand, it is every way so much below it. Sally Fielding has mended her style in her last volume of David Simple, which conveys a useful moral, though she does not seem to have intended it: I mean, shews the ill consequences of not providing against casual losses, which happen to almost every body. Mrs. Orgueil's character is well drawn, and is frequently to be met with. The Art of Tormenting, the Female Quixote, and Sir C. Goodville, are all sale work. I suppose they proceed from her pen, and I heartily pity her,

constrained by her circumstances to seek her bread by a method, I do not doubt, she despises. Tell me who is that accomplished countess she celebrates. I left no such person in London; nor can I imagine who is meant by the English Sappho mentioned in Betsy Thoughtless, whose adventures, and those of Jenny Jessamy, gave me some amusement. I was better entertained by the valet, who very fairly represents, how you are bought and sold by your servants. I am now so accustomed to another manner of treatment, it would be difficult to me to suffer them: his adventures have the uncommon merit of ending in a surprising manner. The general want of invention, which reigns among our writers, inclines me to think it is not the natural growth of our island, which has not sun enough to warm the imagination. The press is loaded by the servile flock of imitators. Lord Bolingbroke would have quoted Horace in this

place. Since I was born, no original has appeared excepting Congreve and Fielding, who would, I believe, have approached nearer to his excellencies, if not forced, by necessity, to publish without correction, and throw many productions into the world, he would have thrown into the fire, if meat could have been got without money, or money without scribbling. The greatest virtue, justice, and the most distinguishing prerogative of mankind, writing, when duly executed, do honour to human nature; but when degenerated into trades, are the most contemptible ways of getting bread. I am sorry not to see any more of Peregrine Pickle's performances; I wish you would tell me his name.

I can't forbear saying something in relation to my grand-daughters, who are very near my heart. If any of them are fond of reading, I would not advise you to hinder them (chiefly because it is impossible) seeing poetry, plays, or romances;

but accustom them to talk over what they read, and point out to them, as you are very capable of doing, the absurdity often concealed under fine expressions, where the sound is apt to engage the admiration of young people. I was so much charmed, at fourteen, with the dialogue of Henry and Emma, I can say it by heart to this day, without reflecting on the monstrous folly of the story in plain prose, where a young heiress to a fond father, is represented falling in love with a fellow she had only seen as a huntsman, a falconer, and a beggar, and who confesses, without any circumstances of excuse, that he is obliged to run his country, having newly committed a murder. She ought reasonably to have supposed him, at best, a highwayman; yet the virtuous virgin resolves to run away with him, to live among the banditti, and wait upon his trollop, if she had no other way of enjoying his company. This senseless tale is, however, so well var-

nished with melody of words, and pomp of sentiments, I am convinced it has hurt more girls than ever were injured by the worst poems extant.

I fear this counsel has been repeated to you before; but I have lost so many letters designed for you, I know not which you have received. If you would have me avoid this fault, you must take notice of those that arrive, which you very seldom do. My dear child, God bless you and yours. I am ever your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, July 24, 1754.

It is always a great pleasure to me, my dear child, to hear of your health, and that of your family. This year has been fatal to the literati of Italy. The marquis Maffei soon followed cardinal Querini. He was in England when you were married. Perhaps you may remember his coming to see your father's Greek inscription:[1] he was then an old man, and consequently now a great age; but preserved his memory and senses in their first vigour. After having made the tour of Europe in the search of antiquities, he fixed his residence in his native town of Verona, where

[1] Presented by Mr. Wortley to Trinity-college, Cambridge.

he erected himself a little empire, from the general esteem, and a conversation (so they call an assembly), which he established in his palace, which is one of the largest in that place, and so luckily situated, that it is between the theatre and the ancient amphitheatre. He made piazzas leading to each of them, filled with shops, where were sold coffee, tea, chocolate, all sorts of sweetmeats, and in the midst, a court well kept, and sanded, for the use of those young gentlemen who would exercise their managed horses, or shew their mistresses their skill in riding. His gallery was open every evening at five o'clock, where he had a fine collection of antiquities, and two large cabinets of medals, intaglios, and cameos, arranged in exact order. His library joined to it; and on the other side a suit of five rooms, the first of which was destined to dancing, the second to cards (but all games of hazard excluded), and the others (where he himself presided in

an easy chair) sacred to conversation, which always turned upon some point of learning, either historical or poetical. Controversy and politics being utterly prohibited, he generally proposed the subject, and took great delight in instructing the young people, who were obliged to seek the medal, or explain the inscription, that illustrated any fact they discoursed of. Those who chose the diversion of the public walks, or theatre, went thither, but never failed returning to give an account of the drama, which produced a critical dissertation on that subject, the marquis having given shining proofs of his skill in that art. His tragedy of Merope, which is much injured by Voltaire's translation, being esteemed a master piece, and his comedy of the Ceremonies, being a just ridicule of those formal fopperies, it has gone a great way in helping to banish them out of Italy. The walkers contributed to the entertainment by an account

of some herb, or flower, which led the way to a botanical conversation; or, if they were such inaccurate observers, as to have nothing of that kind to offer, they repeated some pastoral description. One day in the week was set apart for music, vocal and instrumental, but no mercenaries were admitted to the concert. Thus, at very little expense (his fortune not permitting a large one), he had the happiness of giving his countrymen a taste of polite pleasure, and shewing the youth how to pass their time agreeably without debauchery; and (if I durst say it) in so doing, has been a greater benefactor to his country than the cardinal, with all his magnificent foundations, and voluminous writings, to support superstition, and create disputes on things, for the most part, in their own nature, indifferent. The Veronese nobility, having no road open to advancement, are not tormented with ambition, or its child, faction, and having learn-

ed to make the best of the health and fortune allotted them, terminate all their views in elegant pleasure. They say, God has reserved glory to himself, and permitted pleasure to the pursuit of man. In the autumn, which is here the pleasantest season of the year, a band of about thirty, join their hunting equipages, and, carrying with them a portable theatre, and a set of music, make a progress in the neighbouring provinces, where they hunt every morning, perform an opera every Sunday, and other plays the rest of the week, to the entertainment of all the neighbourhood. I have had many honourable invitations from my old friend Maffei[2] to make one of this society; but some accident or other has always prevented me. You that are accustomed to hear of deep political

[2] The marquis Scipione Maffei, the author of the "Verona Illustrata," 1733, folio, and the "Museum Veronese," 1749, folio, was very highly esteemed in the literary world as an antiquary and virtuoso.

schemes, and wise harangues, will despise, perhaps, this trifling life. I look upon them in another light; as a sect of rational philosophers,—

> Who sing and dance, and laugh away their
> time,
> Fresh as their groves, and happy as their clime.

My paper is out.

M. W. M.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Sept. 20, 1754.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM extremely delighted by your last letter. Your pleasure in your daughter's company is exactly what I have felt in yours, and recalls to me many tender ideas, perhaps better forgot. You observe very justly, that my affection, which was confined to one, must be still more intense than yours, which is divided among so many. I cannot help being anxious for their future welfare, though thoroughly convinced of the folly of being so. Human prudence is so short sighted, that it is common to see the wisest schemes disappointed, and things often take a more favourable turn than there is any apparent reason to expect.

My poor sister Gower, I really think, shortened her life by fretting at the disagreeable prospect of a numerous family, slenderly provided for; yet you see how well fortune has disposed of them. You may be as lucky as lady Selina Bathurst.[1] I wish lady Mary's destiny may lead her to a young gentleman I saw this spring. He is son to judge Hervey, but takes the name of Desbouverie, on inheriting a very large estate from his mother. He will not charm at first sight; but I never saw a young man of better understanding, with the strictest notions of honour and morality, and, in my opinion, a peculiar sweetness of temper. Our acquaintance was short, he being summoned to England on the death of his younger brother. I am persuaded he will never marry for money, nor even for beauty. Your daughter's

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[1] Lady Selina Shirley, daughter of Robert earl Ferrers, wife of Peter Bathurst, esq. of Clarendon-park, county of Wilts.

character perfectly answers the description of what he wished for his bride. Our conversation happened on the subject of matrimony, in his last visit, his mind being much perplexed on that subject, supposing his father, who is old and infirm, had sent for him with some view of that sort.

You will laugh at the castles I build in relation to my grand-children; and will scarcely think it possible that those I have never seen should so much employ my thoughts. I can assure you that they are, next to yourself, the objects of my tenderest concern; and it is not from custom, but my heart, when I send them my blessing, and say that I am your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, 1754.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of September 15, this morning, October 9, and am exceedingly glad of the health of you and your family. I am fond of your little Louisa: to say truth, I was afraid of a Bess, a Peg, or a Suky, which all give me the ideas of washing-tubs, and scowering of kettles.

I am much obliged to Mr. Hamilton, which is according to the academy of compliments; more his goodness than my deserts: I saw him but twice, and both times in mixed company; but am surprised you have never mentioned lord Roseberry,[1] by whom I sent a packet to you, and took

[1] James Primerose, earl of Roseberry, died Nov. 28, 1755.

some pains to shew him civilities: he breakfasted with me at Padua: I gave him bread and butter of my own manufacture, which is the admiration of all the English. He promised to give you full information of myself, and all my employments. He seemed delighted with my house and gardens, and perhaps has forgot he ever saw me, or any thing that belonged to me. We have had many English here. Mr. G***le, his lady, and her suite of adorers, deserve particular mention: he was so good to present me with his curious book: since the days of the honourable Mr. Edward Howard, nothing has ever been published like it. I told him the age wanted an earl of Dorset to celebrate it properly; and he was so well pleased with that speech, that he visited me every day, to the great comfort of madame, who was entertained, meanwhile, with parties of pleasure of another kind, though I fear I lost his esteem at last by refusing to cor-

respond with him. However, I qualified my denial by complaining of my bad eyes not permitting me to multiply my correspondents. I could give you the characters of many other travellers, if I thought it would be of any use to you. It is melancholy to see the pains our pious minister takes to debauch the younger sort of them: but, as you say, all is melancholy that relates to Great Britain. I have a high value for Mr. Pitt's[2] probity and understanding, without having the honour of being acquainted with him. I am persuaded he is able to do whatever is within the bounds of possibility; but there is an augæan stable to be cleaned, and several other labours, that I doubt if Hercules himself would be equal to.

If the duke of Kingston only intends to build a hunting seat at Thorsby, I think it is most proper for the situation, which

[2] The late earl of Chatham.

was certainly by nature never designed for a palace. I hope he will not employ the same architect that built his house in London. You see I am not entirely divested of family prejudices, though I thank the Lord they are not lively enough to give me violent uneasiness. I cannot help wishing well to my ever dear brother's children: however, I have the conscious satisfaction of knowing I have done my duty towards them, as far as my power extended. Nobody can be served against their will. May all your young ones grow up an honour to you! My paper is out: I have scarce room to assure you, my dear child, that I am ever your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, Dec. 19, N. S. 1754.

I RECEIVED yours of October 6, yesterday, which gave me great pleasure. I am flattered by finding that our sentiments are the same in regard to lord Bolingbroke's writings, as you will see more clearly, if you ever have the long letter I have wrote to you on that subject. I believe he never read Horace, or any other author, with a design of instructing himself, thinking he was born to give precepts, and not to follow them: at least if he was not mad enough to have this opinion, he endeavoured to impose it on the rest of the world. All his works, being well considered, are little more than a panegyric on his own universal genius; many of his pretensions are as preposterously inconsistent,

as if sir Isaac Newton had aimed at being a critic in fashions, and wrote for the information of tailors and mantua-makers. I am of opinion, that he never looked into half the authors he quotes, and am much mistaken if he is not obliged to M. Bayle for the generality of his criticisms; for which reason, he affects to despise him, that he may steal from him, with the less suspicion. A diffusive style (though admired as florid by all half-witted readers) is commonly obscure, and always trifling. Horace has told us, that where words abound, sense is thinly spread; as trees overcharged with leaves, bear little fruit.

You do not mention lord Orrery, or perhaps would not throw away time in perusing that extraordinary work, addressed to a son, whom he educates with an intention that he should be a first minister, and promises to pray to God for him if ever he plays the knave in that station. I perceive that he has already been honoured

with five editions. I wish that encouragement may prevail with him to give the world more memoirs. I am resolved to read them all, though they should multiply to as many tomes as Erasmus.

Here are no newspapers to be had but those printed under this government; consequently I never learn the births or deaths of private persons. I was ignorant of that of my poor friend the duke of Bolton,[1] when my daughter's last letter told me the death of the duke, and the jointure he has left his second dutchess.

I am very glad your health is so good. May that and every other blessing be ever yours.

M. W. M.

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[1] He died August 26, 1754. His second wife was Lavinia Fenton, the celebrated Polly Peachum in Gay's Beggar's Opera, whom he married in 1751.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Jan. 1, 1755, N. S.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I WISH you many new years, accompanied with every blessing that can render them agreeable; and that it was in my power to send you a better new year's gift than a dull letter: you must, however, accept it as well meant, though ill performed. I am glad you have found a house to please you. I know nothing of that part of the town you mention. I believe London would appear to me as strange as any place I have passed in my travels, and the streets as much altered as the inhabitants. I did not know lady H. Wentworth[1] was mar-

[1] Lady Harriet Wentworth, daughter of Thomas earl of Strafford, was married to James Vernon, esq., 1743.

ried, though you speak of her children: you see my total ignorance: it would be amusing to me to hear various things that are as indifferent to you as an old almanac. I am sorry my friend Smollett[1] loses his time in translations: he has certainly a talent for invention, though I think it flags a little in his last work. Don Quixote is a difficult undertaking: I shall never desire to read any attempt to new-dress him. Though I am a mere piddler in the Spanish language, I had rather take pains to understand him in the original, than sleep over a stupid translation.

I thank you for your partiality in my

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[1] Dr. Tobias Smollett published "Roderick Random" in 1748; "Peregrine Pickle" in 1751; from 1756 to 1763 was the original manager of the "Critical Review;" "Ferdinand Count Fathom" in 1753; translation of "Don Quixote" in 1754; "History of England," 1758; "Sir Launcelot Graves," 1762; "Adventures of an Atom," 1769; "Humphry Clinker," 1771. He died at Leghorne, Oct. 21, 1771, where he is buried.

favour. It is not my interest to rectify mistakes that are so obliging to me. To say truth, I think myself an uncommon kind of creature, being an old woman without superstition, peevishness, or censoriousness. I am so far from thinking my youth was past in an age of more virtue and sense than the present, that I am of opinion the world improves every day. I confess I remember to have dressed for St. James' chapel, with the same thoughts your daughters will have at the opera; but am not of the Rambler's mind, that the church is the proper place to make love in; and the peepers behind a fan, who divided their glances between their lovers and their prayer book, were not at all modester than those that now laugh aloud in public walks. I tattle on, and forget you're in town, and consequently I ought to shorten my letters, knowing very well that the same letter that would be read thrice over in the country, will be cram-

med into the pocket before 'tis half gone through, when people are in a hurry to go to the court or play-house. My compliments to lord Bute, and blessings to you and yours, to whom I am ever a most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY M.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Jan. 23, N. S. 1755.

I AM very sorry for your past indisposition, and, to say truth, not heartily glad of your present condition; but I neither do nor will admit of your excuses for your silence. I have already told you, some ten or twelve times over, that you should make your eldest daughter your secretary; it would be an ease to yourself, and highly improving to her, in every regard: you may, if you please, at once oblige your mother and instruct your daughter, by only talking half an hour over your tea in a morning.

The dutchess of Queensberry's[1] misfor-

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[1] Charles duke of Queensberry, married lady Mary Hope, daughter of the earl of Hopetoun, July 10, 1754, and was killed by the accidental explosion of a pistol the 20th October following.

tune would move compassion in the hardest heart; yet, all circumstances coolly considered, I think the young lady deserves most to be pitied, being left in the terrible situation of a young (and I suppose) rich widowhood, which is walking blindfold, upon stilts, amidst precipices, though perhaps as little sensible of her danger as a child of a quarter old would be in the paws of a monkey leaping on the tiles of a house. I believe, like all others of your age, you have long been convinced there is no real happiness to be found or expected in this world. You have seen a court near enough to know neither riches nor power can secure it; and all human endeavours after felicity are as childish, as running after sparrows to lay salt on their tails: but I ought to give you another information, which can only be learned by experience, that liberty is an idea equally chimerical, and has no real existence in this life. I can truly assure you, I have never been

so little mistress of my own time and actions, as since I have lived alone. Mankind is placed in a state of dependency, not only on one another (which all are in some degree), but so many inevitable accidents thwart our designs, and limit our best laid projects. The poor efforts of our utmost prudence, and political schemes, appear, I fancy, in the eyes of some superior beings, like the pecking of a young linnet to break a wire cage, or the climbing of a squirrel in a hoop; the moral needs no explanation: let us sing as chearfully as we can in our impenetrable confinement, and crack our nuts with pleasure from the little store that is allowed us.

My old friend, cardinal Querini, is dead of an apoplectic fit, which I am sorry for, notwithstanding the disgust that happened between us, on the ridiculous account, of which I gave you the history, a year ago. His memory will probably last as long as this province, having embel-

fished it with so many noble structures, particularly a public library well furnished, richly adorned, and a college built for poor scholars, with salaries for masters, and plentifully endowed. Many charitable foundations, and so large a part of the new cathedral (which will be one of the finest churches in Lombardy), has been built at his expence; he may be almost called the founder of it. He has left a considerable annuity to continue it, and deserves an eminent place among the six prelates that have devoted what they received from the church to the use of the public, which is not here (as in some countries) so ungrateful to overlook benefits. Many statues have been erected, and medals cast to his honour, one of which has the figures of Piety, Learning, and Munificence; on the reverse, in the attitude of the three graces. His funeral has been celebrated by the city with all the splendor it was ca-

pable of bestowing, and waited on by all ranks of the inhabitants.

You told me, some months since, that a box was made up for me. I have never had the bill of lading, and know not whether you have received the little bill of exchange sent by your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, March 1, 1755.

I PITY lady Mary Coke[1] extremely. You will be surprised at this sentiment, when she is the present envy of her sex, in the possession of youth, health, wealth, wit, beauty, and liberty. All these seeming advantages will prove snares to her. She appears to me, as I observed in a former instance, to be walking blindfold upon stilts, amidst precipices. She is at a dangerous time of life, when the passions are in full vigour, and, we are apt to flatter ourselves, the understanding arrived at maturity. People are never so near play-

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[1] Lady Mary Coke is the fifth daughter of John duke of Argyll, and was married to Edward lord viscount Coke, eldest son of the earl of Leicester, who died in 1755. The title became extinct in that family in 1759.

ing the fool, as when they think themselves wise: they lay aside that distrust which is the surest guard against indiscretion, and venture on many steps they would have trembled at, at fifteen; and, like children, are never so much exposed to falling, as when they first leave off leading-strings. I think nothing but a miracle, or the support of a guardian angel, can protect her. It is true (except I am much mistaken), nature has furnished her with one very good defence. I took particular notice of her, both from my own liking her, and her uncommonly obliging behaviour to me. She was then of an age not capable of much disguise, and I thought she had a great turn to economy: it is an admirable shield against the most fatal weaknesses. Those who have the good fortune to be born with that inclination seldom ruin themselves, and are early aware of the designs laid against them. Yet, with all that precaution, she will have so many

plots contrived for her destruction, that she will find it very difficult to escape; and if she is a second time unhappily engaged, it will make her much more miserable than the first; as all misfortunes, brought on by our own imprudence, are the most wounding to a sensible heart. The most certain security would be that diffidence which naturally arises from an impartial self-examination. But this is the hardest of all tasks, requiring great reflection, long retirement, and is strongly repugnant to our own vanity, which very unwillingly reveals, even to ourselves, our common frailty, though it is every way a useful study. Mr. Locke, who has made a more exact dissection of the human mind than any man before him, declares, that he gained all his knowledge from the consideration of himself. It is indeed necessary to judge of others. You condemn lord Cornbury without knowing what he could say in his justification. I am per-

suaded he thought he performed an act of rigid justice, in excluding the duchess of Queensberry from an inheritance to which she had no naturàl, though a legal, right; especially having had a large portion from her real father. I have heard him talk on that subject without naming names, and call it a robbery within the law. He carried that notion to a great height. I agreed with him, that a woman who produced a false child into a family, incurred the highest degree of guilt (being irreparable); but I could not be of his opinion, that it was the duty of the child, in such a case, to renounce the fortune the law entitled it to. You see he has acted by a maxim he imagined just. Lady E**x, being, inside and out, resembling lord Clarendon; and whoever remembers lord Carleton's eyes, must confess they now shine in the duchess' face. I am not bribed, by lord Cornbury's behaviour to me, to find excuses for him; but I have always endeavoured to look on the

conduct of my acquaintance without any regard to their way of acting towards me. I can say, with truth, I have strictly adhered to this principle whenever I have been injured; but I own, to my shame be it spoken, the love of flattery has sometimes prevailed on me, under the mask of gratitude, to think better of people than they deserved, when they have professed more value for me, than I was conscious of meriting. I slide, insensibly, into talking of myself, though I always resolve against it. I will rescue you from so dull a subject, by concluding my letter with my compliments to lord Bute, my blessing to my grand-children, and the assurance of my being ever your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, July 20, N. S. 1755.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE now read over the books you were so good to send, and intend to say something of them all, though some are not worth speaking of. I shall begin, in respect to his dignity, with lord Bolingbroke, who is a glaring proof how far vanity can blind a man, and how easy it is to varnish over to one's self the most criminal conduct. He declares he always loved his country, though he confesses he endeavoured to betray her to popery and slavery; and loved his friends, though he abandoned them in distress, with all the blackest circumstances of treachery. His account of the peace of Utrecht is almost equally unfair or partial: I shall allow that,

perhaps, the views of the Whigs, at that time, were too vast, and the nation, dazzled by military glory, had hopes too sanguine; but surely the same terms that the French consented to, at the treaty of Gertruydenberg, might have been obtained; or if the displacing of the duke of Marlborough raised the spirits of our enemies to a degree of refusing what they had before offered, how can he excuse the guilt of removing him from the head of a victorious army, and exposing us to submit to any articles of peace, being unable to continue the war? I agree with him, that the idea of conquering France is a wild extravagant notion, and would, if possible, be impolitic; but she might have been reduced to such a state, as would have rendered her incapable of being terrible to her neighbours for some ages: nor should we have been obliged, as we have done almost ever since, to bribe the French ministers to let us live in quiet. So much for his political reasonings, which,

I confess, are delivered in a florid, easy style; but I cannot be of lord Orrery's opinion, that he is one of the best English writers. Well turned periods, or smooth lines, are not the perfection either of prose or verse; they may serve to adorn, but can never stand in the place of good sense. Copiousness of words, however ranged, is always false eloquence, though it will ever impose on some sort of understandings. How many readers and admirers has madame de Sevigné, who only gives us, in a lively manner, and fashionable phrases, mean sentiments, vulgar prejudices, and endless repetitions? Sometimes the little tattle of a fine lady, sometimes that of an old nurse, always tittle tattle; yet so well gilt over by airy expressions, and a flowing style, she will always please the same people to whom lord Bolingbroke will shine as a first rate author. She is so far to be excused, as her letters were not intended for the press; while he labours to

display to posterity all the wit and learning he is master of, and sometimes spoils a good argument by a profusion of words, running out into several pages a thought that might have been more clearly expressed in a few lines, and, what is worse, often falls into contradiction and repetitions, which are almost unavoidable to all voluminous writers, and can only be forgiven to those retailers, whose necessity compels them to diurnal scribbling, who load their meaning with epithets, and run into digressions, because (in the jockey phrase) it rids ground, that is, covers a certain quantity of paper, to answer the demand of the day. A great part of lord Bolingbroke's letters are designed to shew his reading, which, indeed, appears to have been very extensive; but I cannot perceive that such a minute account of it can be of any use to the pupil he pretends to instruct; nor can I help thinking he is far below either Tillotson or Addison, even

in style, though the latter was sometimes more diffuse than his judgment approved, to furnish out the length of a daily Spectator. I own I have small regard for lord Bolingbroke as an author, and the highest contempt for him as a man. He came into the world greatly favoured both by nature and fortune, blest with a noble birth, heir to a large estate, endowed with a strong constitution, and, as I have heard, a beautiful figure, high spirits, a good memory, and a lively apprehension, which was cultivated by a learned education: all these glorious advantages, being left to the direction of a judgment stifled by unbounded vanity, he dishonoured his birth, lost his estate, ruined his reputation, and destroyed his health, by a wild pursuit of eminence even in vice and trifles.

I am far from making misfortune a matter of reproach. I know there are accidental occurrences not to be foreseen or avoided by human prudence, by which a

character may be injured, wealth dissipated, or a constitution impaired: but I think I may reasonably despise the understanding of one who conducts himself in such a manner as naturally produces such lamentable consequences, and continues in the same destructive paths to the end of a long life, ostentatiously boasting of morals and philosophy in print, and with equal ostentation bragging of the scenes of low debauchery in public conversation, though deplorably weak both in mind and body, and his virtue and his vigour in a state of non-existence. His confederacy with Swift and Pope puts me in mind of that of Bessus and his sword-men, in the King and no King, who endeavour to support themselves by giving certificates of each other's merit. Pope has triumphantly declared that they may do and say whatever silly things they please, they will still be the greatest geniuses nature ever exhibited. I am delighted with the comparison given

of their benevolence, which is indeed most aptly figured by a circle in the water, which widens till it comes to nothing at all; but I am provoked at lord Bolingbroke's misrepresentation of my favourite Atticus, who seems to have been the only Roman that, from good sense, had a true notion of the times in which he lived, in which the republic was inevitably perishing, and the two factions, who pretended to support it, equally endeavouring to gratify their ambition in its ruin. A wise man, in that case, would certainly declare for neither, and try to save himself and family from the general wreck, which could not be done but by a superiority of understanding acknowledged on both sides. I see no glory in losing life or fortune by being the dupe of either, and very much applaud that conduct which could preserve an universal esteem amidst the fury of opposite parties. We are obliged to act vigorously, where action can do any

good; but in a storm, when it is impossible to work with success, the best hands and ablest pilots may laudably gain the shore if they can. Atticus could be a friend to men, without awaking their resentment, and be satisfied with his own virtue without seeking popular fame: he had the reward of his wisdom in his tranquillity, and will ever stand among the few examples of true philosophy, either ancient or modern.

You must forgive this tedious dissertation. I hope you read in the same spirit I write, and take as proofs of affection whatever is sent you by your truly affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

I must add a few words on the essay on exile, which I read with attention, as a subject that touched me. I found the most abject dejection under a pretended

fortitude. That the author felt it, can be no doubt to one that knows (as I do) the mean submissions and solemn promises he made to obtain a return, flattering himself (I suppose) he must of course appear to be at the head of the administration, as every ensign of sixteen fancies he is in a fair way to be a general, on the first sight of his commission.

You will think I have been too long on the character of Atticus. I own I took pleasure in explaining it. Pope thought himself covertly very severe on Addison, by giving him that name; and I feel indignation whenever he is abused, both from his own merit, and because he was ever your father's friend; besides that it is naturally disgusting to see him lampooned after his death by the same man who paid him the most servile court while he lived, and was besides highly obliged by him.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Sept. 22, 1758.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED, two days ago, the box of books you were so kind to send; but I can scarce say whether my pleasure or disappointment was the greater. I was much pleased to see before me a fund of amusement, but heartily vexed to find your letter consisting only of three lines and a half. Why will you not employ lady —— as secretary, if it is troublesome to you to write? I have told you over and over, you may at the same time oblige your mother and improve your daughter, both which I should think very agreeable to yourself. You can never want something to say. The history of your nursery, if you had no other subject to write on, would be very acceptable to me. I

am such a stranger to every thing in England, I should be glad to hear more particulars relating to the families, I am acquainted with—if Miss Liddel[1] marries the lord Euston I knew, or his nephew, who has succeeded him; if lord Berkeley[2] has left children; and several trifles of that sort, that would be a satisfaction to my curiosity. I am sorry for H. Fielding's death, not only as I shall read no more of his writings, but I believe he lost more than others, as no man enjoyed life more than he did, though few had less reason to do so, the highest of his preferment being raking in the lowest sinks of vice and misery. I should think it a nobler and less nauseous employment to be one of the staff-officers that conduct the noc-

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[1] She married Augustus Henry duke of Grafton, Jan. 29, 1756.

[2] Augustus earl of Berkeley died Jan. 9, 1755, and left two sons and two daughters.

turnal weddings. His happy constitution (even when he had, with great pains, half demolished it) made him forget every thing when he was before a venison pasty, or over a flask of champaigne, and I am persuaded he has known more happy moments than any prince upon earth. His natural spirits gave him rapture with his cook-maid, and cheerfulness when he was starving in a garret. There was a great similitude between his character and that of sir Richard Steele. He had the advantage both in learning, and, in my opinion, genius: they both agreed in wanting money in spite of all their friends, and would have wanted it, if their hereditary lands had been as extensive as their imagination; yet each of them was so formed for happiness, it is pity he was not immortal. I have read the Cry; and if I would write in the style to be admired by good lord Orrery, I would tell you, "the Cry" made me ready to cry, and the "Art of Tormenting,"

tormented me very much. I take them to be Sally Fielding's, and also the female Quixotte: the plan of that is pretty, but ill executed: on the contrary, the fable of the Cry is the most absurd I ever saw, but the sentiments generally just; and I think, if well dressed, would make a better body of ethics than Bolingbroke's. Her inventing new words, that are neither more harmonious nor significant than those already in use, is intolerable. The most edifying part of the Journey to Lisbon, is the history of the kitten: I was the more touched by it, having a few days before found one, in deplorable circumstances, in a neighbouring vineyard. I did not only relieve her present wants with some excellent milk, but had her put into a clean basket, and brought to my own house, where she has lived ever since very comfortably.

I desire to have Fielding's posthumous works, with his Memoirs of Jonathan

Wild, and Journey to the next World; also, the Memoirs of Verocand, a man of pleasure, and those of a young lady. You will call this trash, trumpery, &c. I can assure you I was more entertained by G. Edwards than H. St. John, of whom you have sent me duplicates. I see new story books with the same pleasure your eldest daughter does a new dress, or the youngest a new baby. I thank God I can find play things for my age. I am not of Cowley's mind, that this world is—

A dull, ill acted comedy;

Nor of Mrs. Philips's, that it is—

A too well acted tragedy.

I look upon it as a very pretty farce, for those that can see it in that light. I confess a severe critic, that would examine by ancient rules, might fix many defects; but 'tis ridiculous to judge seriously of a puppet-show. Those that can laugh, and

be diverted with absurdities, are the wisest spectators, be it of writings, actions, or people.

The Stage Coach has some grotesque figures that amuse: I place it in the rank of Charlotte Summers, and perhaps it is by the same author. I am pleased with sir Herald for recording a generous action of the duke of Montagu, which I know to be true, with some variation of circumstances. You should have given me a key to the Invisible Spy, particularly to the catalogue of books in it. I know not whether the conjugal happiness of the duke of B****d is intended as a compliment or an irony.

This letter is as long and as dull as any of Richardson's. I am ashamed of it, notwithstanding my maternal privilege of being tiresome.

I return many thanks to lord Bute for the china, which I am sure I shall be very fond of, though I have not yet seen it. I

wish for three of Pinchbec's watches, shagrine cases, and enamelled dial plates. When I left England, they were five guineas each. You may imagine they are for presents; one for my doctor, who is exactly Parson Adams in another profession, and the others for two priests, to whom I have some obligations.

This Richardson is a strange fellow. I hereby despise him, and eagerly read him, nay, sob over his works, in a most scandalous manner. The two first tomes of Clarissa touched me, as being very resembling to my maiden days; and I find in the pictures of Sir Thomas Grandison and his lady, what I have heard of my mother, and seen of my father.

This letter is grown (I know not how) into an immeasurable length. I answer it to my conscience as a just judgment on you, for the shortness of yours. Remember my unalterable maxim, where we love

we have always something to say; consequently my pen never tires when expressing to you the thoughts of your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, March 2, N. S. 1756.

DEAR CHILD,

I HAD the happiness of a letter from your father last post, by which I find you are in good health, though I have not heard from you for a long time. This frequent interruption of our correspondence is a great uneasiness to me: I charge it on the neglect or irregularity of the post. I sent you a letter by Mr. Anderson a great while ago, to which I never had any answer; neither have I ever heard from him since, though I am fully persuaded he has wrote concerning some little commissions I gave him. I should be very sorry he thought I neglected to thank him for his civilities. I desire lord Bute would inquire about him. I saw him in company with

a very pretty pupil, who seemed to me a promising youth. I wish he would fall in love with my grand-daughter. I dare say you laugh at this early design of providing for her: take it as a mark of my affection for you and yours, which is without any mixture of self-interest, since, with my age and infirmities, there is little probability of my living to see them established. I no more expect to arrive at the age of the dutchess of Marlborough than to that of Methusalem; neither do I desire it. I have long thought myself useless to the world. I have seen one generation pass away; and it is gone; for I think there are very few of those left that flourished in my youth. You will perhaps call these melancholy reflections: they are not so. There is a quiet after the abandoning of pursuits, something like the rest that follows a laborious day. I tell you this for your comfort. It was formerly a terrifying view to me, that I should one day be

an old woman. I now find that nature has provided pleasures for every state. Those are only unhappy who will not be contented with what she gives, but strive to break through her laws, by affecting a perpetuity of youth, which appears to me as little desirable at present as the babies do to you, that were the delight of your infancy. I am at the end of my paper, which shortens the sermon.

M. WORTLEY.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, March 22, 1756.

I HAVE received, but this morning, the first box of china lord Bute has been so obliging to send me; I am quite charmed with it, but wish you had sent in it the note of the contents, it has been so long deposited, that it is not impossible some diminution may have happened. Every thing that comes from England is precious to me, to the very hay that is employed in packing. I should be glad to know any thing that could be an agreeable return from hence. There are many things I could send; but they are either contraband, or the custom would cost more than they are worth. I look out for a picture; the few that are in this part of Italy, are those that remain in families, where they

are entailed, and I might as well pretend to send you a palace. I am extremely pleased with the account you gave of your father's health. I have wrote to desire his consent in the disposal of poor lady Oxford's legacy; I do not doubt obtaining it. It has been both my interest and my duty to study his character, and I can say, with truth, I never knew any man so capable of a generous action.

A late adventure here makes a great noise from the rank of the people concerned: the marchioness Licinia Bentivoglio, who was heiress of one branch of the Martinenghi, and brought ten thousand gold sequins to her husband, and the expectation of her father's estate, three thousand pounds sterling per annum, the most magnificent palace at Brescia (finer than any in London), another in the country, and many other advantages of woods, plate, jewels, &c. The cardinal Bentivoglio, his uncle, thought he could not chuse bet-

ter, though his nephew might certainly have chose among all the Italian ladies, being descended from the sovereigns of Bologna, actually a grandee of Spain, a noble Venetian, and in possession of twenty-five thousand pounds sterling per annum, with immense wealth in palaces, furniture, and absolute dominion in some of his lands. The girl was pretty, and the match was with the satisfaction of both families; but she brought with her such a diabolical temper, and such *luciferan* pride, that neither husband, relations, or servants, had ever a moment's peace with her. After about eight years warfare, she eloped one fair morning, and took refuge in Venice, leaving her two daughters, the eldest scarce six years old, to the care of the exasperated marquis. Her father was so angry at her extravagant conduct, that he would not, for some time, receive her into his house; but, after some months, and much solicitation, parental fondness prevailed, and she

remained with him ever since, notwithstanding all the efforts of her husband, who tried kindness, submission, and threats, to no purpose. The cardinal came twice to Brescia, her own father joined his intreaties, nay, *his holiness* wrote a letter with his own hands, and made use of the church authority, but he found it harder to reduce one woman than ten heretics. She was inflexible, and lived ten years in this state of reprobation. Her father died last winter, and left her his whole estate for her life, and afterwards to her children. Her eldest was now marriageable, and disposed of to the nephew of cardinal Valentino Gonzagua, first minister at Rome. She would neither appear at the wedding, nor take the least notice of a dutiful letter sent by the bride. The old cardinal (who was passionately fond of his illustrious name) was so much touched with the apparent extinction of it, that it was thought to have hastened his death. She continued

in the enjoyment of her ill humour, living in great splendor, though almost solitary, having, by some impertinence or other, disgusted all her acquaintance, till about a month ago, when her woman brought her a bason of broth, which she usually drank in her bed. She took a few spoonfuls of it, and then cried out, it was so bad it was impossible to endure it. Her chambermaids were so used to hear her exclamations, that they ate it up very comfortably; they were both seized with the same pangs, and died the next day. She sent for physicians, who judged her poisoned; but, as she had taken a small quantity, by the help of antidotes she recovered, yet is still in a languishing condition. Her cook was examined, and racked, always protesting entire innocence, and swearing he had made the soup in the same manner he was accustomed. You may imagine the noise of this affair; she loudly accused her husband, it being the interest

of no other person to wish her out of the world: he resides at Ferrara (about which the greatest part of his lands lie), and was soon informed of this accident. He sent doctors to her, whom she would not see, sent vast alms to all the convents to pray for her health, and ordered a number of masses to be said in every church of Brescia and Ferrara. He sent letters to the senate at Venice, and published manifestoes in all the capital cities, in which he professes his affection to her, and abhorrence of any attempt against her, and has a cloud of witnesses that he never gave her the least reason of complaint, and even since her leaving him has always spoke of her with kindness, and courted her return. He is said to be remarkably sweet tempered, and has the best character of any man of quality in this country. If the death of her women did not seem to confirm it, her accusation would gain credit with nobody. She is certainly very sincere in it herself, being

so persuaded he has resolved her death, that she dare not take the air, apprehending to be assassinated, and has imprisoned herself in her chamber, where she will neither eat nor drink any thing that she does not see tasted by all her servants. The physicians now say, that perhaps the poison might fall into the broth accidentally; I confess I do not perceive the possibility of it. As to the cook suffering the rack, that is a mere jest, where people have money enough to bribe the executioner. I decide nothing; but such is the present destiny of a lady, who would have been one of Richardson's heroines, having never been suspected of the least gallantry; hating, and being hated universally, of a most noble spirit, it being proverbial—" as proud as the marchioness Licinia."

I am afraid I have tired you with my long story: I thought it singular enough to amuse you. I believe your censure will be different from that of the ladies here, who

all range themselves in the party of the marquis Guido. They say he is a handsome man, little past forty, and would easily find a second wife, notwithstanding the suspicion raised on this occasion. Many customs, and some laws, are as extraordinary here as the situation of the capital.

I would write to lord Bute to thank him, if I did not think it would be giving him trouble. I have not less gratitude: I desire you would assure him of it, and that I am to you both

Your most affectionate mother,

M. WORTLEY.

TO

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

London, 1756.

YOURS of the 8th of March came hither on the 28th, which is the time in which letters usually pass between London and Venice. I bundle up all your letters, and keep a list of the dates of what I send you; so that I cannot mistake as to either. I do not remember that any letter sent to me from a foreign country, besides yours, ever miscarried. As to those I send abroad, I always send two servants with them to the post; so that I do not trust to one servant's honesty: and the officer of the post sees there is evidence of the delivery; so that his neglect or fraud may easily appear. This method is taken by all foreign ministers of state.

I have now something to mention that I believe will be agreeable to you: I mean some particulars relating to lord Bute, which you have not learned from the prints, nor from our minister at Venice. He stood higher in the late prince of Wales's favour than any man. His attendance was frequent at Leicester-house, where this young prince has resided, and since his father's death has continued without intermission, till new officers were to be placed about him. It is said that another person was designed to be groom of the stole; but that the prince's earnest request was complied with in my lord's favour. It is supposed that the governors, preceptors, &c. who were before about him, will be now set aside, and that my lord is his principal adviser. It is not easy to express how well bred and reasonable the prince always appears at his public levee, which is every Thursday, and on all other occasions. The king of France,

and the empress of Germany, always shew themselves to great advantage; and this young prince's behaviour is equal to that of either of them. He is supposed to know the true state of this country, and to have the best inclinations to do all in his power to make it flourish.

These appearances do much honour to my lord; and the continuance of his favour is, I believe, wished by all that are unconnected with some of those who have been ministers of state.

E. WORTLEY MONTAGU.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

T. Gillet, Printer, Salisbury-square.